

• CLOVER • LEAVES •

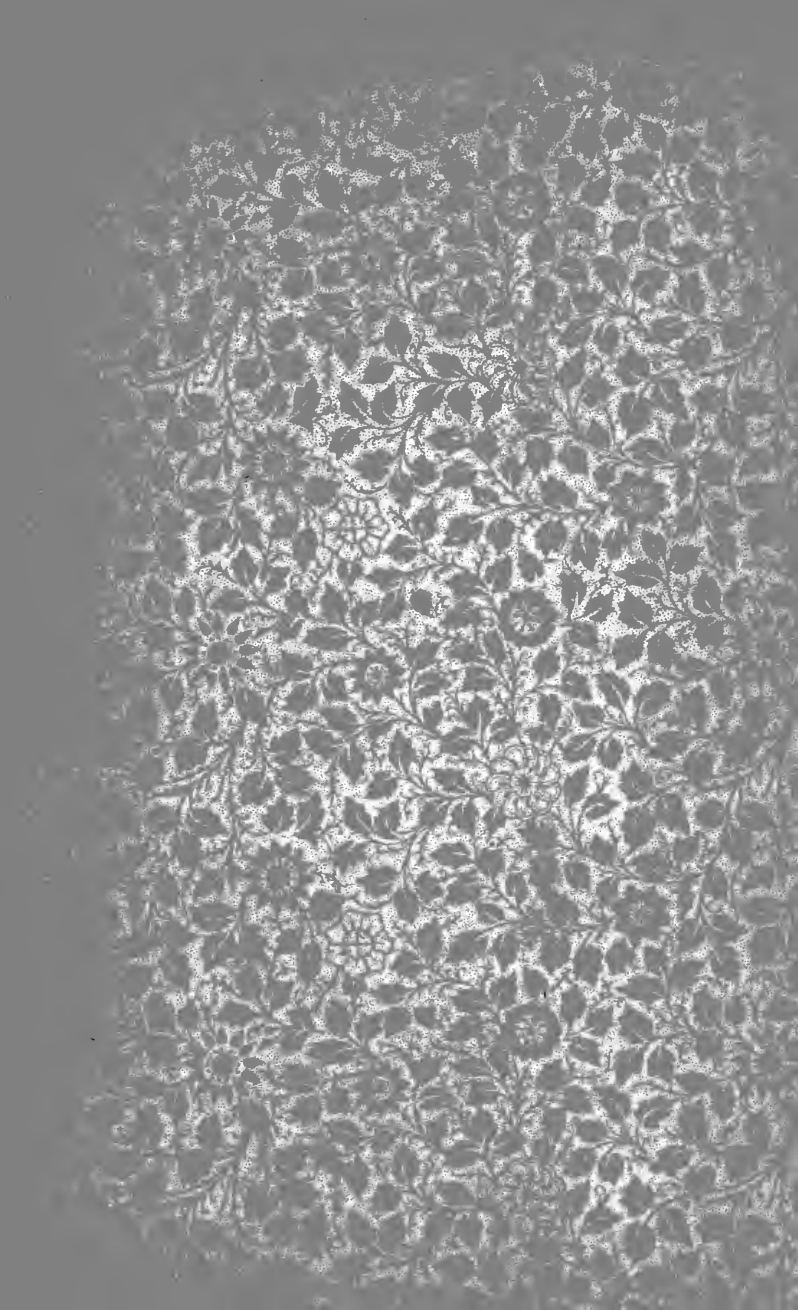


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CLOVER-LEAVES

A Collection of Poems

BY ✓

ELLA M. BAKER

"

COMPILED AND ARRANGED BY

K. G. B.



BOSTON

D. LOTHROP AND COMPANY

FRANKLIN AND HAWLEY STREETS

[1885]

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IN MEMORIAM.

ELLA M. BAKER.

MAY 8, 1884.

THOSE who knew her can understand how misplaced all words of praise must be, remembering that she shrank from public avowal as the arbutus hides under the snows of March.

Far better than all the testimony love could bring, or artistic delicacy of appreciation could render, is the record of the life she lived; for deeds are more powerful than words, because they bear the very footprints of the soul.

And still some laurel of remembrance should be wound about these poems of hers, flowerlike in their sensitiveness of thought, their grace and potency of expression, with the wood odor of the violet, and the fine tracery of the artist's hand that no unpractised touch can emulate. There was the voice of the nightingale in her songs, though she thought it the note of the wood-thrush only.

But who can give us the lost colors of the sunset? or who can paint us Una, in the clamor of our daily life? So no justice can be done this white soul, whose humility

was, like the shield of Britomart, between the world and its own unconscious purity.

One who loved her would lay this tribute of thought at her feet. These were her flowers of poesy; and they have the freshness of the moist earth in the spring, the coolness of the brook where the wild birds stood to drink.

The world may not heed them, but she would never choose that it should.

The lilies of life lift their cups of gold unnoticed in some hidden path, and then the angels gather them for the Great King's garden. What though the world knew them not, since it is the better for their sweetness?

B. S. S. P.

MEMOIR
OF
ELLA M. BAKER.

ELLA M. BAKER, the subject of this memoir, and author of the following poems, was born in Stafford Springs, Conn., December 11, 1848, the oldest daughter of Gilbert H. and Clara K. Baker. For thirty-five years she "lived faithfully a hidden life;" and on May 8, 1884, entered the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

Now that she has gone away for a time, and the pen laid down with which she so often carried help, comfort, and strength to others, it is thought well to collect the scattered poems of a lifetime, and send them forth in the lasting form of a volume, both for the satisfaction of the author's friends, and for the good work they still have to do. Accompanying these, it is desired that a short memoir, or, rather, monograph, be written, to indicate certain characteristics, perhaps to crystallize certain truths, from a life that was lived for others in the deepest and broadest sense of the phrase. The honor of being, in even this small way, associated with the memory and work of Ella Baker is dimmed only by the knowledge

that the words written down here are all unworthy of their subject.

The story of her life, if fully written out, would be the simple story of a woman who never neglected the humblest duties of to-day under the spur of ambitious hopes for to-morrow. From childhood the most commonplace affairs of life were used so faithfully by her that they lost all tinge of commonness. Somehow, she managed to clothe the veriest drudgery with sentiment, and from the meanest and homeliest surroundings she extracted joy.

Answering a friend once, to whom she had submitted the manuscript of her last published book, and who criticised what seemed to him the too simple, almost undignified, heading of a chapter, she wrote :—

“I suppose you think I again unfortunately descend from my dignity (Dignity!) in using such a heading as ‘Shoe-strings.’ However, it is easily changed. But I am much less ashamed of my Mother Goose tendencies and similar descents that mortify you so, than it’s necessary to explain.

Indeed, she had much less need to be ashamed of them than any other writer to the constituency for which she composed. She had the faculty of clothing simplicity with beauty and tenderness to a degree far greater than many whom the world calls great.

From a child Miss Baker wrote verses. She had not only a poetical vein of thought, but a rythmical turn of expression; and, in dictating little stories to her mother and her child friends, at the age of six and eight, she did so almost invariably in rhyme. When ten years old she wrote a poem of condolence to an aged grandmother confined to her bed with sickness, which showed such precocity of thought and method, that it was shown to

William Cullen Bryant, who declared that no child of that age could have written it without help. This, of course, was a real compliment; but her nature was so outraged by this stain, as she thought, upon her truthfulness, that for many years after she could not hear the name of Bryant without annoyance, nor even read his poems. So was truth even much more precious to her than any reward of fame, or mere reputation for brilliancy.

From girlhood her poems were published, very few of the earlier efforts, however, being over her signature. This shrinking from connecting her name with her work was a characteristic which followed her through life. It was only the urgency of friends, and a feeling, I think, that perhaps such reluctance might be cowardice, that compelled her to have her name printed. Whatever she wrote, whatever she did, was done by her as one under orders. It was a constant cry, a constant appeal, almost apology to her near friends, that she would not have done thus and so, were she not impelled by a power outside of herself.

In a time of very great pain, caused by the death of a dearly loved brother's wife, she writes:—

“I work this week, writing sorrowful letters upon letters, and digging, because I will, will, will, upon ‘Soldier and Servant.’ All voices of the outside people seem very far off; but, after a little, I shall hear again. I want to get that manuscript on. It seems a thing I’m willed to do,—a humble thing enough.”

She did get on with it, and the book was published a few weeks before her death.

In course of writing the same book, so strangely was she impelled to the making of it, so utterly impressed with the fact that it was a message which through her

the Master must give to the world at whatever sacrifice, that she writes :—

“If this gets to be a book, this simple and lowly work of mine, there will be blood in it. I shall have paid blood for it, — honorable cost.”

While Miss Baker always persisted that her literary work was, “by the way,” not a profession, but merely interjectional, she accomplished a great deal in a comparatively short time.

In early girlhood she wrote for “Little Pilgrim,” “Little Corporal,” “Mother’s Journal;” and later, the “Congregationalist,” “Faith and Works,” “Nursery,” “Wide Awake,” “Harper’s Young People,” “Young Christian Soldier” (to which, in the last year of her life, she contributed a series of Sunday-school lesson helps for younger children), “Advance,” “Living Church,” “Young Churchman,” “Christian Union,” and the “Springfield Republican.” Her favorite *nom de plume* was “Sister Clover,” a home name of daily use by her immediate family.

Her mission seemed to be directly to the young people, but how often and again the simple eloquence of her words went home to children of larger growth. Two books bear her name, both published by Lothrop & Co. of Boston, — the first, “Christmas Pie,” a collection of Christmas stories, and the book in which she was most wrapped up of all her literary work, “Soldier and Servant,” the name, as the idea, taken from the Baptismal Service in the Book of Common Prayer, where the priest receives the child into the congregation of Christ’s flock, “to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and servant unto his life’s end.”

The work which lay the closest to Ella Baker’s heart, and was to her the great work of her life, was that of sister, daughter, and friend.

Of that home relationship, so sweet, tender, beautiful and blessed, I do not dare speak. The memory of it rests still like a benediction on that home among the hills which she so dearly loved, and of which she was so living a member.

As friend and neighbor,—a word she liked,—as a part of the community, a member of the village body, a citizen, she filled a place which few may attempt after her. The Girls' Library Club, the Library Association, the almshouse, the poor people and sick people within her possible reach, any movement that had in view the public good,—in all these she found an outlet for the soul heavy with the burden of humanity around her, and throbbing in sympathy with all the needs and wants of the human brotherhood. The brain was too great for the body that held it. Very many times she was compelled to realize that—

“They also serve who only stand and wait.”

“To get *used*,” she writes to a friend who had been fretting under the disappointment of some ambitious hopes,—“To get *used*, and not to dictate which way, is the simple, straight, most actual wish I have. Therefore, you will always know that all of me or mine you can ever make serve anybody is so much wing power to me.”

Just before the illness that finally conquered the worn and delicate body, Miss Baker was appointed one of the board of visitors to the county children's home, a work in which she thoroughly delighted; but, greatly to her regret, weakness prevented her from ever assuming actively the duties of the position.

For many years she was the means of providing annually a Christmas-tree, with gifts and good cheer, to

the inmates of the town poor-house. Not one smallest child was forgotten. It was to those woefully forlorn and neglected people, with vacant eyes and passionless faces, to whom she was most closely drawn. She went, like her Master, to the sorest, the neediest, the most helpless and wounded of the earth. How many sad hearts she has comforted! To the wings of how many bruised and broken lives has she lent strength!

Thanks for all this only oppressed her, because she was conscious of doing His work, not her own. It seemed almost like sacrilege to be thanked and complimented for going about her Father's business, and walking up "the street which is called Straight."

In all her duties and occupations, Ella Baker was peculiarly a child of God. For mere amusement and recreation, save as it contributed to the pleasure of others, she had little attraction. She took life so seriously and earnestly in the sacred recess of her own heart, that her keenest pleasures were tinged with a vague shadow that was almost pain.

In very early childhood her religious development received something of a check from the strong Puritan element of the preaching to which she was accustomed to listen. There was never any attraction in her mind, I think, towards that stern school of theology which lays down iron rules, and makes little or no allowance for individual characteristics. She was scarcely repelled even by harsh statements: she only wondered, making the remark once to her mother, that she wondered how those people who believed all they heard from the pulpit could be so calm under it. There was a natural hush and decorum to her religious experience, which is indicated in the fact that when, with her child friends, she "played at church," she invariably wrote out the prayer for her

cousin, who acted as "minister," to read. This, too, having been brought up amidst Congregational surroundings, and knowing nothing of a liturgical service.

When, in later years, she learned something of the Episcopal Church, she found herself at once at home. When it became possible for her to learn the services of the Church regularly, by the starting of a mission in Stafford, her joy was complete. From the hour in which she knelt before the bishop for confirmation, until the hour in which the Master beckoned for His disciple, she was a faithful daughter of the Church, to whose historic faith she clung with pathetic strength, whose sacrament of the Holy Communion she partook with a belief in its efficacy "to the uttermost,"—a belief so passionate as to be startling.

She once told her rector that all her religious life had been a struggle between an Oliver Cromwell conscience and a Charles Kingsley heart,—the contrast being suggested by the fact that through her paternal grandmother she was a descendant of the great Protector, and through her mother was also connected with the noble name and blood of Canon Kingsley, that knightly soldier of God, without fear and without reproach.

Very much does Grace Church, Stafford, owe to this woman, who was a devout communicant, a faithful seeker and learner of the truth of God, a beloved teacher in the Sunday school, a helpful hand at every occasion where her heart and brain could be in possible demand.

It is singular, from one point of view, how vitally the religious life of one so essentially spiritual was bound up with the forms of liturgical devotion. The burning words of the Prayer Book meant every thing they seemed to say, to her. There was, to her mind, in the Church no form without spirit, no spirit without form. She was

ever thankful to be directed in spiritual matters,—she who was so able to direct others. Constantly as she was giving out of herself to others, using and spending herself for others, she was still in a manner unconscious of it, and was ever expressing her gratitude for what she had received, when she herself had been the one to bestow most.

By whatever way she impressed herself upon others, whether in the contact of daily life, through her public-spirited acts, by means of her wide and varied correspondence, or through the channel of fugitive poems and stories, the impression was always the same. One writes to me since her death, —

“I regarded her with an esteem which was reverential; and, although I never saw her, and knew nothing of her besides those revelations of her nature in verse which we have printed during several years, I well divined her. It must be more easy to believe in the communion of saints when one has known such a soul as hers.”

So from all quarters, after her death, came messages of grief and condolence to the family from which she had been taken. At the funeral all classes were represented. She was a part of, and had touched, them all. Every thing that could suggest sad thoughts of death was covered up at that grave. The very earth thrown out to make room for the tired body was hidden underneath the flowers and leaves. Literally she was buried in flowers, as all through her life they had been her delight, the very breath of her nostrils.

For many years she had wished to have an appropriate altar in the chancel of her parish church. Something had always hindered. Her longing to make the house of God beautiful, which she could not effect in her life, was accomplished by her death; for over the

grave on the hillside that sunny day in the May Easter-tide a plan was agreed upon, and on the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, October 12, 1884, a finely carved black walnut altar was placed in Grace Church, Stafford Springs, to the glory of God, and in sacred memory of the one whose desire was thus accomplished, by the subscription of her many friends in the parish, and a few clergymen under whose respective rectorships she had lived. The inscription was simply, —

In Memoriam. ELLA M. BAKER, *May 8th, 1884,*

— the day of her birth into Paradise.

A sermon appropriate to the occasion was preached by a former rector, who owes to her the incentive and inspiration that will last for life; and the Holy Communion was celebrated.

“Was she not glad in Paradise,” was said that day, “knowing that we are recognizing through her the communion of saints — knowing that in that ‘cloud of witnesses’ by which we are surrounded we have seen her form afar?”

It had been Miss Baker’s intention to gather her poems some day in a volume; but she lay down her burdens too soon to add this to them, and it is done for her by loving hands. May these words that are prefixed in humble prose to the song flights of her poetic nature be, if only to a small degree, helpful in throwing into relief the grace and tenderness of the vanished hand, the joy and gladness of the voice that is still.

She died as she had lived, planning happiness for others, worried a little that so much was done for her, totally forgetful of self. In the certain hope of resurrection from the dead, in the communion of the Holy Catholic Church, she passed on, leaving her human life

so broken into fragments among her beloved as that it is hard, even over this gap of months, to realize that she is dead.

She has passed on, not to a land of shadows, but to walk before the Lord in the Land of the Living.

Of death let us say no harsh nor bitter nor wondering things for having taken even her, but rather as she once wrote, "The reverend name of Death. A mystery with august royal seals upon it, none may tamper with it."

None indeed!

BEVERLEY E. WARNER.

EARLIER POEMS.

JACK FROST'S STOCKING.

'Tis Christmas morn, all fair and bright,
Though thick the snow lies on the ground ;
The sun sends down a gladsome light,
And church-bells ring with merry sound.

Two stockings by a fire-place hang,
And see ! — two little forms glide in ;
Now the door closes with a bang,
And two glad voices raise a din.

I love to witness their delight,
As all their treasures they espy —
Gift after gift revealed to sight,
Brings from their lips a joyous cry.

And now, perched on a window-seat,
With laps well filled with sweets and toys,
They watch the passers in the street,
The merry groups of girls and boys.

When all at once, they both espy
An icicle on the sill without —

“Oh, mother, come and look!” they cry,
“See Jack Frost’s stocking hanging out.”

Indeed, it is in form exact
A very pretty Christmas hose,
With store of good things closely packed,
And silver-white, sun-tipped with rose.

They cry — “Let’s take it in, and see
What Santa Claus gives *him* to-day;
He will not know we’re making free
With it — he’s far enough away.”

So up they make the window fly,
And each puts out an eager hand;
But Jack himself, who lingers nigh,
Just touches them with icy wand!

The little fingers quick unclose,
And let the shining stocking fall; —
And so you see, nobody knows,
What ’t held, if any thing at all.

1860.

A-STRAWBERRYING.

TORN straw hats and shoeless feet,
Dark eyes and cheeks of cherry,
Shaker bonnets, dresses neat,
Blue eyes, half shy, half merry.

Gayly along the way they go,
 Checkered with dark and bright,
Faces full of laughing glow,
 Hearts full young and light.

Through the sunshine lying bright
 On the earth so glad and green,
Through the shadows falling light,
 With sunshine flecks between.

Through the narrow country street,
 Winding its lazy way ;
Above it, where the branches meet,
 The birds sing loud all day.

Along the lane so bright and fair,
 With birches growing tall,
Pink dresses that the roses wear,
 And sunshine over all.

Along the barren pasture-land,
 With daisies sprinkled over,
Through fields where thick the grasses grow,
 With buttercups and clover.

Along the wood, so grand and tall,
 Whose shadows, cool and deep,
Pure from the dust, from stain or fall,
 Its flowers in safety keep.

Oh ! pure young heart of childhood,
Keep long thy bright, fair June,
The cool, fresh shadow of the wood,
The bird's glad-hearted tune.

1863.

HOW THE VIOLETS CAME FOR MY LITTLE PET.

FOLDED still in an earth-home deep,
The violet lies in a peaceful sleep ;
Soft snow-flakes spread their mantle light
Over its chamber, out of sight,
And low beside the little rill,
It sleeps, and waits, and lieth still.

But when the smiling spring is come,
It seeks and finds this hidden home,
And calls the treasure resting there
To mount into the upper air,
Once more to smile beside the brook,
And in its clear, bright waters look.

She sends sunbeams, in dress of gold,
To speak the flight of frost and cold,
To spread warmth in the sheltered dell,
And many a wooing story tell,
How gladly unlocked brooklets sing,
How bird-songs through the warm air ring.

She sends tales by the gentle breeze
Of the wonders coming to the trees;
They tell how tender they will be
When she her old-time home will see,
And each and all call tenderly,
“Oh, wake! Spring waits for thee!”

And the violet wakes at last,
To find the long winter past;
With care she dons her dress of blue,
Hopeful and trusting and true,
With a smile in her sweet blue eyes,
At the thought of her lovers' surprise.

Then with some graceful touches more,
She rises out her little door,
And by the sunbeams she is seen,
In her hood and cloak of green,
Standing in beauty shy and sweet,
Above her winter's still retreat.

TWO WREATHS.

I.

A WREATH that her lithe fingers wove,
Of smiling evergreen,
Soft curves of trailing greenerie,
With berries in between, —

Red berries shining ruddily,
Like firelight touches there,
As when its brilliance interbraids
With twilight's dusky hair ;
Beneath, the rhyme of blending voices,
Of musical, light laughter,
Careless and free, and full and sweet
As flow of bubbling water,
Love's fond caress and tender kiss,
The fall of youthful feet,
And kindest words, and gentlest tones,
And all that makes life sweet. ,
Bright wreath upon the warm home-walls,
From thy nook gaily lean,
For hope is life, and life is joy,
And joy is ever green !

II.

A wreath of immortelles,
Pale immortelles, that rise
Among the flowers like white-winged moths
'Mid radiant butterflies ;
Hanging through starlight hours
On the marble's spotless white ;
Waiting the gilded dawn,
The day's swift angel-flight ;
Swaying in whispering winds,
Wet with the grieving rain ;
Folded in down of snow,
Lit with sunset's rose-stain ;

Gathering, sometimes, tear-drops
From sky-like eyes o'erbending,
That there grow wistful watching
For life's appointed ending.
Yet fold thy hands upon the wreath
Above that grave's low portal,
For faith is life, and life is love,
And love, — love is immortal !

1868.

SOMEBODY'S KNOCKING.

THERE is somebody knocking. Hark ! who can it
be ?

It's not at the door ; no, it's in the elm-tree.

I hear it again ; it goes rat-a-tat-tat ;

Now, what in the world is the meaning of that ?

I think I can tell you. Ah ! yes ! it is he !

It's young Master Woodpecker, gallant and free.

He's dressed very handsomely (rat-a-tat-tat),

Just like a young dandy, so comely and fat.

He's making his visits this morning you see ;

Some friends of his live in that tall old elm-tree ;

And, as the trees have no door bells (rat-a-tat-tat),

Of course he must knock ; what is plainer than that ?

Now Madam Bug hears him rap at her door ;

Why doesn't she come ? Does she think him a bore ?

She stays in her chamber, and keeps very still,
I guess she's afraid that he's bringing a bill.

"I've seen you before, my good master," says she ;
"Although I'm a bug, sir, you can't humbug me.
Rap on if you please ; at your rapping I laugh.
I'm too old a bug to be caught with your chaff."

The poor little baby bugs are not so wise ;
They run out to meet him. "Good-morning!" he
cries ;
Then gobbles them all with a rat-a-tat-tat,
Without even stopping to take off his hat.

OVER AND OVER.

OH! she is so tired of the over and over,
Poor little impatient pet!
Tear-mists gather blinding and hide from her finding
The seam where the needle is set ;

The long, long seam of over and over,
Its stitches so painfully slow,
So wet with the tear-rains, so soiled with the dust-
stains,
In crooked and uneven row.

For the thread it will knot sewing over and over,
The needle will rust and bend,

As it wearily lingers in the hot little fingers
So far, so far from the end.

“Oh! it is so hard, this over and over!”
And deep in my heart I cover
How with desolate pain I repeat it again,
“So hard, this over and over!”

For I, too, am learning the over and over;
My teacher is patient with me;
It is the long strife of the years of a life
That lonely and empty must be,

To bear: little learner, the over and over
Of lagging day after day
From whose work and endeavor, my sun is forever,
Forever, now, shut away.

Yet, sometime, seeing clearer we shall praise the
dear love,
(My child, I know it is true),
That, despite our blind asking, kindly gave us our
tasking,
Our over and over to do.
1867.

A HEART TOWARD GOD.

WHILE through the daylight's crystal bands
Sifted the last pale sunshine-sands,
I sat and wept with folded hands,

Mourning that I had sheaved up naught,
Could render nothing I had wrought,
Save erring in the ends I sought.

But while I let my hot tears flow,
Anon there seemed a voice to grow,
Which murmured tenderly and low,

“Is it so much at work the hands have done,
Is it so much at prizes we have won,
Is it so much at races we have run,

“That God looks, watching all our ways,
While they wind through the changeful days
We would set to His praise,

“As at the heart, continual to try
If it doth keep its windows open high,
And looking towards the sky,

“Clear-shining, pure and clean,
With no spot on the crystal seen,
No shadow in between?

“That thence all longings that aspire,
All seeking, aim, desire,
As leaves bend toward the sun, look higher.

“Though marred thy work be oft with soil,
Though vain may seem the earnest toil,
The honest effort met with foil,

“Towards God thy faint heart keep;
His sunshine shall within it creep,
And all the shadows oversweep.

“Though thy task trivial seem, below
The high realities, that so
Sublime from thy soul’s outlooks show.

“Though the world’s voices round thee ring,
The Circe tempt, the Syren sing,
Though faint for angel-minist’ring.

“And fearful lest thou yield and stray
From out the straight and narrow way,
Away from Christ, the Guide, the Stay.

“Towards God thy tried heart keep,
And stay not now to rest or weep;
Ere long ‘*He giveth His beloved sleep!*’”

1868.

THE TWO GUESTS.

Joy knock’d!

My gates I opened wide
My welcome guest to meet;
With gladness and with pride
His nearing steps to greet.
He came — he dwelt with me,
He sat beside my hearth, .

And filled my halls with gaiety,
With music and with mirth.
His fingers on the harp were light,
His songs he sang were gay ;
My life with him was smooth and bright
For many a sunny day.
Springing his airy steps along
Blossoms his feet caressed,
And birds burst forth with gleeful song —
O, beautiful, bright guest !
And yet sometimes to me,
Like a sudden tolling bell
In the midst of gaiety,
Some solemn question fell :
“ Will he forever tarry bright,
Thy guest, thy cherished guest ?
And does he lead thee, plain and right,
To calm, and peace, and rest ? ”
But I forgot in revelry
The warning kindly given ;
I would not think, I would not see
My guest was sent from heaven.

Grief knock'd !

My gates I would shut hard,
My doors I would bar tight,
In vain I closed — in vain I barred —
Against his silent might.
The garlands faded, withered, died ;
The festal fires were gone ;

The unbidden guest sat by my side,
With him I was alone.
His songs rung sore my heart,
His tales, his every word
Struck like a sharp and piercing dart
On the trembling soul that heard.
How 'neath his touch my sweet harp wailed,
My gold-dust turned to sand,
My birds took flight, my strong oak failed ;
How cold, how cold his hand !
But when at night I sat alone
And through the glaring day,
Ever I heard a soothing tone
Over and over say,
"Be not cast down, my child ;
In paths they have not known,
To you so dark and wild,
I lead and keep my own.
I chasten those whom I receive,
And scourge the ones forgiven."
So I am calm, although I grieve
Knowing my guest from heaven.

1868.

GOING A-PICNICING.

I.

A JOURNEY through Morning Land
Sometime was made,

Wading through sunshine
And fording the shade.
Sober dame Clematis
Saw them go by,
Spreading her wools to bleach,
There where they lie.
She looked up but gravely,
And sighed a mild sigh,
For pleasuring's plenty
And wool, you know, high.
But Thistle-down followed
Far out of sight,
And Golden-rod nodded,
And laughed, yes, outright!

Baskets to right of them,
Shyly concealed;
Baskets to left of them,
Half-way revealed;
Baskets in front of them,
Brazen and bold,
But every one of them
Secrets untold.
Oh, unsolved mystery,
Hidden from sight
In napkined sanctity,
Sacred and white,
Sent they no timid thought
Towards thy retreat?
Dreamed they naught of sublime then,
Mused nothing of sweet?

Pink ribbons a-shimmer,
Some ravellings, may be,
Of a low morning cloud
That dropped into the sea.
They tangle the wind
And they flutter all day;
What harm to be looking,
It happens that way?
Bright eyes they were brightest,
Lit and a-glow,
And whose voice was sweetest,
The listening winds know,
For all day they carried
And all day they brought
The cadence of joy
Or of jesting they caught.

Bushes impertinent
Peeped in to stare;
Bushes intolerant
Beckoned "Your fare!"
Tall bushes brigand-like
Stood in the way;
Thick bushes curious
Cried to them "Stay!"
While bushes villainous
Stood by to flout,
And bushes insolent
To scoff at and scout.
Aimed for by branch and twig,
Jostled by rut and rock,

Still rode the baskets safe
Through every shock.

II.

In silence chathedral
Waited the wood ;
Like its saints and its prophets
The reverend pines stood.
Stirless the shadows bowed,
Nuns clad in grey ;
Noiseless among them crept
Sunbeams astray.
But the leaf-satined floor
Was rustling astir
With heavier footfalls
Than light chestnut burr.
Its shade was a-flicker
With hue after hue,
Its green aisles a-quiver
With sounds ringing new ;
Its treasure up-rooted,
Its trinkets sought after,
While gleeful, light laughter
Struck every high rafter.
While Squirrel peeped slyly
And Rabbit breathed low,
While Cricket hid frightened
And let his pipe go,
And the timid young wood-bird
Made wild haste away.

A strange nest was builded,
In skilful array
Of dry twig and branchlet,
'Till out of it came
Fire's eagle-winged nestlings,
The wild brood of flame.
And she in philosophy
More versed than pies,
In books and in baking
Unequally wise,
Potatoes, not poets,
Choosing her part ;
Codfish, not custom,
Taking to heart ;
Heroic philanthropist,
Fork in her hands,
There by the glowing coals
With high resolve stands !

Meandered the spider,
Taking survey,
Round river of table-cloth
Flowing away.
Oh ! then was unveiling
Of victorious arts,
Sonnets in sugar,
Sunset in tarts.
Foam-architecture,
Sculpture in dough,
Floury geology,
Carvings in snow.

Oh ! well for the spider
 To gaze long and deep.
Oh ! well for some witness
 Their record to keep ;
For like frost on the meadow,
 Like froth on the river,
Like dew on the morning,
 They vanished — forever !
But the little brown tenants
 Of moss-thatch and stone
From the crumbs of the feasting
 Could build for their own,
When the shadows and silence
 Again fell a-calm,
And the solemn, lone pines
 Chanted low vesper psalm.

POEMS OF NATURE.

PRUDENCE.

WHEN I became aware
Of Pussy Willow, there
 By road and meadow-edge
On tiptoe peeping out,
There was no blue-bird's shout,
 Nor robin's, in her hedge.

Steel was the cold March sky,
Ay, snow-flakes fluttered by ;
 Old March his moods we know,
And how a flower would fare
That ventured, pink and rare,
 Within his reach to glow.

But I laughed out to see
How dauntless, safe and free,
 Could Pussy Willow show, —
A country cousin, in
Her wrappings not too thin
 For wind, and may-be snow !

No fear, indeed, of her,
So warmly clad with fur,
 The prudent little thing!
No wonder she can dare,
First of her kin, the air
 That sets us shivering.

Prudence will have its day,
And long this silver gray
 She'll wear, grandmother's way;
At last, full late enough,
She'll drop the heavy stuff,
 In gold, for silver, gay.

A SONG OF THE NEST.

There was once a nest in a hollow,
Down in the mosses and knot-grass pressed,
Soft and warm and full to the brim:
Vetches leaned over it, purple and dim,
 With buttercup buds to follow.

JEAN INGELOW.

SLEEP, birdie, little, new birdie
 In the new and beautiful nest,
Soft-lined as a rich jeweled-casket,
 And downily shaped to the breast.
My song of the nest will not wake thee
 More than winds as they chant in the clover
And the world will be better and gladder,
 And wiser for hearing it over.

It's a song how this world is so wide, sweet ;
How deep down the ground is ; how high
Above oak-rib and rafters of hemlock
The wonderful sun, and the sky.
Yet how, flying, we needn't fear falling
From even earth's loftiest crest,
For, somehow, Love made us ; we're right, Sweet ;
Love is the song of the nest !

The song is, We're tiny and fragile,
While the world is peopled with vast,
Great crowding giants of creatures ;
Still they jostle us not, going past.
And there's food enough left, and to spare, dear,
And room enough, room of the best,
For Love takes care of that, birdie,
Love is the song of the nest.

It's a song of dewdrops and sunbeams,
Dawns and fresh-water springs,
Of violets, lilies and rose-buds,
All pure and young growing things ;
A song of wings and their liftings, —
Gilt clouds, the serene air above ;
A song of singing for rapture,
And, ever, a song of Love.

And the song is, I love you, I love you,
My darling of every sweet name ;
It's a song full of pet words and kisses
A song of my gladness you came.

Hush, lovely one, fed, brooded over,
Naught need you do save to rest ;
And it's Love, O it's Love I'm singing, —
Love is the song of the nest.

PUSSY WILLOW.

I.

Who knows what Pussy Willow knows?
She grows on the edge of the snows,
Sleet cuts sharply and storm-wind blows,
Not a bud blooms, nor green leaf shows ;
Did she mistake to come so soon ?
Arch and shining, from night to noon,
Still she rocks unconcerned ; she knows
Something we do not know — and goes
Living on safely as the rose.

II.

We know what Pussy knows, may be,
Though she lives it more fearlessly ;
In our own place, in our own hour
Safe are we, though all hostile power
In seeming ruin overwhelm our lot.
Ruined we cannot be, cannot
Fail or be foiled, so long as each
That instinct follows, fills that reach
Appointed his or hers to be !
Therefore let each soul hardily

With faithfulness act out its part,
 Keeping a high, undaunted heart ; —
 Some growths have March and some have June ;
 Neither's too late, neither's too soon.

ONCE IN A YEAR THE MAY-FLOWERS
 BLOW.

ONCE in a year the may-flowers blow,
 Opening deep to their hearts of snow,
 Pouring their precious perfumes wide,
 Nor saving one hoarded drop beside ; —
 Sweet spendthrifts ! that, somehow, God seems to
 choose
 Before the economical Jews !

But all the year else, 'neath May-flower's thatch,
 No face, feel as you may at the latch,
 Peeps from the lattice ; the tenants seem
 Idle sloth-lovers, who lie and dream,
 Contented just to be warm and still,
 With close-drawn curtain and silent sill.

Through the long months when the leaves lie bare,
 Read, passer-by, in the fair name there,
 Of Charity, who is heavenly wise,
 That thus lives idlest to our stern eyes,
 It may be their time to flower, but wait, —
 A time long hindered, sometimes, and late.

Let us step carefully, then, above
Mere leaves, empty of aught to love ;
To all their season at last comes right,
Joyful to push up through to the light.
Is it ours to chide while we miss the flower ?
No man knoweth the day or the hour.

TO LET.

THERE'S a little brown tenement over the way
Standing empty and silent now day after day ;
The tenants have vanished from threshold and
thatch,

But left the gates wide, and the door on the latch,
And open, ungarrisoned, enter who may,
Stands the little brown tenement over the way.

Set lofty, set airy against the sunrise,
It catches the rose of the dawn's slow surprise ;
Yet firm its foundation, its frame-work secure
Against the north wind and the storm to endure,
So fair, the skies golden, so staunch, the skies grey,
Lies the little brown tenement over the way.

With loving fidelity builded together
I saw it rise slowly in dreamy May weather ;
No clamor of hammer nor tool's steely gleam
Wedged timber to timber, and beam upon beam,
While the carpenters patiently worked by the day
On the little brown tenement over the way.

The walls are all woven with lichen gilt over,
And soft mosses mingle where silken hairs cover ;
E'en though they be narrow, the chambers are
high —

For it stoops to no roof but the grand inlaid sky ;
If the householder gloried, who says him nay,
In his little brown tenement over the way ?

To let ! for the casements are vacant and lone ;
To let ! for the bright, songful inmates are flown ;
Save for wayfaring leaf or for white wing of snow
None home-wise or guest-wise go forward and fro ;
But I smile when I see thee, and dream of the May,
Dear little brown tenement over the way !

A BUNCH OF VIOLETS.

WHILE the vast throng in the street swept by
And the city's hum swelled loud,
One homesick soul to itself complained,
"O the loneliness of the crowd !"

While quiet toiled in her empty house
A patient woman, that day,
"Heaven cheer and keep thee, my absent one !"
Was all that her heart could say.

How can we tell, by the telegraph wires
What message may pass below ?

How subtly transmits invisible love
Betwixt us, can we, then, know?

An unknown hand through that shifting street
Bore a few violets by;
The wistful soul thrilled with quick relief,
Though it scarcely reasoned why.

From the violet's fearless innocence,
From a flower's familiar face,
Cheered with a thought of that distant friend
The stranger took heart of grace.

She did not see that her wish came true,
He heard not its sound, — and yet
No swifter ministry did he need
Than came by a violet.

By countless such untracked ways *God* grants
Love passage from heart to heart;
No prayer miscarries that's left with Him,
Though friends may be seas apart!

SCRUPLES.

DEAR arbutus, flushing pink,
Ere I gather you I think,
Can you bear to go away
In a pent-up house to stay?

I can offer you no place
That with yours compares in grace,
Or can match your lovely face.
Oh! your couch of leaf and moss
With such vines is wrought across;
Troubadour-like, ev'ry hour
Talks the brook beside your bower;
If you thirst, sweet dew is brought,
And, with ministries unsought,
Sun, and earth, and air, and sky,
To caress you, all are by;
In your praise the robin sings;
You will lose all these glad things.
Can you bear to go away,
With me in my home to stay?

Little maid with wistful eyes,
Gladly from my couch I rise;
Gladly where you list I go;
This I blossom for, and grow.
Little maid, could you, then, bear
Selfishly to sip and share
Day by day in sun and air,
Day by day in love and care,
But ne'er give the love anew?
Ne'er go ministering too?
Not to languish where I please,
Not to bide in petted ease,
Count I by my being meant
And its fulness of content.

Living's giving ; I to live
Freely love and freely give,
Joyful all my treasure spare,
Just to comfort anywhere.

ACROSS LOTS.

"THE shortest way is 'cross lots," said
The Host ; " You cannot miss the red
House ; mount that hill ; go straight ahead."

Two fields away the red house stands ;
First the bald slope of pasture lands
You climb ; crumbling beneath your heel
The brittle, warm, gray moss you feel ;
Blackberry vine with prickly clutch,
Like kittens' claws snatches at such
Ribbon or fold as it can touch ;
Your foot a ground-bird's nest well nigh
Invades, where three frail ovals lie ;
And, further on, in the short grass,
A very fairy tent you pass.
Of sheerest cobweb ever spun
Its canvas is, stretched in the sun,
And pale pink petals of wild rose
Are strewn upon its roof ; there shows
Beneath this canopy a red
Ripe strawberry — and who instead

More royal? — Breath of growing things
Mingled you breathe; the light wind flings
Scents separate out, — wild rose, sweet fern,
Birch, brake, whichever way you turn.
Somewhere a hidden brook its rune
Hums low, and rustling leaves the tune
Accompany with languid beat;
A rabbit runs by, scared and fleet —
Ah! thou faint pencil-mark of path,
Can there be other track that hath
Such charms? — Go winding on and on,
For all the traveler's haste seems gone.

But climb the old wall here, gray-green
With lichen, chinks of light between
The loose-piled stones. No path leads through
The mowing field, all damp with dew;
It lies untracked, a sheeny haze;
On its smooth breadth your trail will raise
An embossed hue as now you go
To gather daisies where they grow;
Now nodding columbines, that blow
In mists of grasses to and fro.
The buttercups their burnished gold
Like lit lamps ev'rywhere uphold;
But though the field is idly gay
For the young robins school to-day
Is keeping, and the teacher's note
Sounds steady from a tireless throat.
While you the tangled clover wade
By bees, half-jealous room is made

And hov'ring butterflies, arrayed
In glory.

Good Host, were one stayed
Ecstatic here like them all day,
'Twere easy! Is the shortest way
Across lots? Let the truant say.

A CAREER.

BABE Dandelion
Shines on the ground
And like a gold piece
Waits to be found;
Babe Dandelion
Laughs at the rain,
Trying all dream-tunes
O'er her in vain;
Willfully all day,
Spite lullaby,
Broad awake stares she
Up at the sky.

Child Dandelion
Sits in the sun,
Hides in the grasses,
Peeps forth for fun,
Shakes out her gold locks,
Beckons the bees,

Plays with the breezes,
Takes her own ease.

Maid Dandelion
All her lamps fills
At the red sunbeams
'Thwart morning hills ;
Lets them flare broadly
All through the day,
Then at the night-fall
Smolder away.

Dame Dandelion
Lives all alone
High in her castle
Of cobweb stone,
Castle built noiseless,
Reared fairily,
All casements silver
Set airily.

Dame Dandelion,
Hair turned to gray,
What is she thinking,
Thinking all day ?
Ah, child ! ah, maiden !
Deem not that you
All sweetest thoughts have
That ever grew.

Grown frail and faded,
Those loosened here
Easily soar and
Mount without fear.

DAISIES BLOWING IN THE WIND.

O DAISIES! blowing in the wind
With alternate, slow ease,—
My lady's fingers troubling light
The white piano keys
Might rhythmic motions cause, and lift
Or drop the notes like these!

And 'twere well thought that more things
Than fabled singing spheres
To music swing so delicate
That he their song who hears,
And knows its melody divine,
Must have seraphic ears.
Where the morning sun flows over
With golden tides the bare
Broad pasture-land, I list and look,
Suspecting music there;
O daisies blowing in the wind,
I pray you, let me share!

Where is the unseen score ye spell?
What is the tune it makes?

How many little choristers
A whole field-full it takes !
Of chancels filled with surpliced boys
I dream, for your sweet sakes.

Deaf, curious, attentive, I
Upon the dry moss lie
And study by the hour how you
Between me and the sky
Beat time, with rests irregular,
And half-notes measured by
This unseen score you know so well,
You know — and why not I ?

I cannot catch nor guess the air,
Yet stealing over me
Comes sense of soothing psalm-tunes played
Well and accordantly ;
If thus my life shall seem to those
Who judge by what they see,
Yet cannot read its secret score,
Happy indeed 'twill be !

OUT OF FASHION.

THE flowers in Grandma's beds that grow
Are out of fashion, as you know ;
So Pink, Sweet-William, Violet,
Balsam, Verbena, Mignonette

Met in convention, as I heard,
And on the solemn fact conferred,
Discussing in some trepidation,
“Are we a superseded nation?”
“Your out of style, you know you are!”
The Sun-flower cried, mocking afar,
“I am the fashion, I! behold
My brown æsthetic, and old-gold;
Nor do I see how one can bear
Such gaudy hues as those you wear.
Then you have such old-fashioned taste
For strong perfumes, which you just waste
In a profusion, vulgar quite;
And your antique ideas of height
Are out of date, really absurd!”
Of their reply I heard no word.
But, as it seems, after debate,
Some one was heard to intimate
The motion of appointing two
Who would report what they should do;
And this committee, hard to get,
At last was Pink and Mignonette.
Long their decision was delayed;
The Four-o’clocks slept in the shade,
When, midst a breathless hush, they all
Listen to hear the verdict fall:
“Having deliberated, we
Agree no other course we see,
As far as us concerns, and so
Applying to you all, we know,
But this: that Pink grow pinker yet

And go on so ; that Mignonette
Continue sweet." On this the crowd
Unfashionable smiled and bowed,
Flutt'ring consent. And therefore they
Deck Grandma's garden to this day,
And some, who lack æsthetic sense,
Are known to steal them through the fence !

COBWEBS.

I.

WILL the day be fair or no ?

Waking up before the sun,
How the children barefoot run,
Throw the window-blinds back wide,
Push the tangled curls aside,
And in rumpled ruffles stand,
Night-gown caught up in one hand,
Peering at the morning gray !

Bless the spider spinners ! they,
Sitting up to work all night
Have left proudly strewn in sight
Webs, like napkins that look much,
Fairy table-cloths, or such,
Spread with dew, that's served in their
Frail, round, antique crystal ware.

How they know before we do
That the skies will keep their blue,
I cannot declare, but ne'er
Child doubts that it will hold fair
If these wise web-spinners dare
Leave their gossamers stretched there.
So light-heartedly they go
Dancing, witching to and fro,
Quite contented, just to know
Cobwebs low, cobwebs low !

II.

Will the day be wet or dry ?

Slowly, slowly comes daylight ;
Every height with mist is white ;
Restlessly the damp wind blows,
Scatters petals from the rose,
Rudely tips the poplar leaves
Till each silver side upheaves,
Rustles through late fields of grains,
Frets, and to itself complains.
Chimneys listlessly unfurl
Dull, thin smoke all out of curl ;
Clouds scud thick, like tarnished sails
Toward the north, and pensive quails
Clear and sweet enunciate
Their two syllables of fate.
Hopeful Blue Eyes, with her face
Pressed against the curtain lace

Marks how prudent spider hung
On a bush her hammock swung ;—
Are there cobwebs in her eyes?
Something dim I there see rise ;
Well I know the reason why, —
Cobwebs high, cobwebs high !

UP IN A DANDELION BALL.

IF I could choose my place, from which
To see the world outside withal,
I think I'd straightway seat me up
In a dandelion ball.
Of all air-castles is not this
As dainty a one as the best ?
So perfectly its framework joints,
Its light foundations rest,
It seems a very bubble, hung
And poised mysteriously ;
Being besides, all crystal panes
Conveniently as can be.
And the way into my parlor,
(If once I could get there !)
Like the spider's in the ballad,
Would be up a winding stair,
For, observatory-like
Is my round tower built, and high.
I suppose long, spiral stairs

From the dark base lead, whereby
Whoever knows their secret can
Climb up ; but, — more's the pity ! — I

Cannot track out that mystery
Howe'er I patient spy and pry,
Lying and listening in the grass,
With the round tower o'er my head,
Rogue Buttercup tickling my chin,
And my learnèd book left unread.

I wish I could ! I wish I had
The missing clew ! then who of all
Castellans proud as I, set up

In my dandelion ball ?

My crystal palace in the sun
Would shine like silver, finely wrought
And burnished, before all men's eyes ;
Through my uncounted windows caught,
Should come sweet sights of butterflies,

Grave insects at their deep affairs,

Grass wet with dew, birds, hurried bees
Complaining of their many cares ;

Sweet sounds of breathing roots, and flap
Of rustling wings ; sweet scents

Of clover and unnamed perfumes !

There, one among the field's contents,

Who knows what I might overhear
What receipts catch ? for Nature far

More wise is in her management,
Than any of us mortals are.

Now Honeysuckle's honey-bags

How is it they're sewed up so tight,
And yet no seam? The Lilies, how
Ring they, and not by sound, but sight?
Ah! none knows how wise I might get
Watching, harkening night and day,
For there a philosopher might grow,
All interruptions kept away
By the safe secret of the stairs!

And so till the sky should fall
Rocked by the winds I'd sit in state,
Up in a dandelion ball.

MUSIC BETWEEN THE ACTS.

THE gorgeous pageant of the summer's done,
So rich that filled our every ravished sense;
Nor yet, in autumn's glorious *rôle* begun
The lit-up hills, the harvestings commence.

But next, a hush, like waiting in the air,
The sense of listening and of quiet brings;
No bird works now, with busy, noisy care,
Nor, like a child in church, irreverent sings.

The orchestra plays sweet,
Keeping to time beat slow;
It is a steady tune,
Keyed soft, pitched low.

The fairy instruments,
Of perfect make,
In every chord and string
Vibrant, awake.

Grasshopper playing flute,
And cricket violin,
Pianissimo duet,
Well blended, first begin.
At *forte* cicada
In intervals but rare,
Strikes 'thwart the monotone
Bass trumpet's vivid blare.

To everything a time,
A use, an hour, shall be ;
To every voice an ear ;
Such is the fixed decree.
So, Nature leaves a pause
That when best fitted here
Musicians' smallest pipes
May play, and man may hear.

How smooth their well-learned parts !
How even and serene
The gentle orchestra
Doth thus discourse between !
But we who list and wait, —
Each to the rest unknown,
Sets to the wordless song
A meaning of his own.

GOLD AND GRAY.

I.

WHEN golden rod is gay, my dear,
The autumn leaves are here,
And high and low, and far and near
They deck the waning year,
When golden rod is gay, my dear,
When golden rod is gay.

Oh ! hush around her lies the air,
And mellow lights are there,
Ripe fragrance of the orchards rare,
Low music everywhere,
When golden rod is gay all day
When golden rod is gay.

A-nod, a-gleam, a-lit, a-shine,
She lifts her torches fine,
And drinks old year's best hoarded wine —
His mellowest sunshine,
Fair golden rod along the way,
O golden rod, the gay !

II.

When golden rod is gray, my dear,
Ah ! faded mount and mere
Its best and brightest dead and sere,
Storm, wind, and winter here,
When golden rod is gray, they say,
When golden rod is gray.

By windy wayside, barren hill,
'Tis tenantless and still,
No oil her emptied lamps to fill
Nor guest nor song at will,
When golden rod sits gray, all day,
When golden rod is gray.

And yet with patience's own meek grace
She in her unlit place
Uplifts her wan and pallid face
Above the snow's embrace,
Old golden rod along the way,
O golden rod the gray.

III.

When golden hair is gray, my dear,
Thou wilt no less uprear
Brow written *Resignation*, clear,
To deep for fret or fear.
Who bears that sign each wintry year,
Can but be lovely here,
Though golden hair is gray, my dear,
When golden hair is gray.

THE LAST OF SUMMER.

O, SUMMER, stay ! why haste away
Like one who takes from me by stealth
Some precious thing, and runs to hide,
Snatched swift and sly, my own, my wealth ?

Too likely this, O lovely thief!
But I am loth to lend belief.

Why haste away? Yet, Summer, stay,
Perchance a gift to leave behind
Is in thy mind, and I shall find
When thou art gone the token kind;
Thus he for thanks who will not wait,
Leaving a prize, is known too late.

But she is gone, nor will return;
Each can but look himself within,
Anxious count o'er his former store
To find hath ought abstracted been,
Or hath he in possession more
Of treasure than he had before.

Ah! who but misses something now?
The costly loss but himself knows.
Yet things are left — did she forget? —
Some memory, some sheaf, some rose.
We charge on thee, swift Summer deft,
Both something taken, something left.

Summer's wide, royal all, she threw
Wide open lavishly; and free
Were we to choose, welcome to use,
And keep our own. Our fault if we,
Failing to store up her largess,
Mourn now more taken, left us less.

A BUTTERFLY IN BOWDOIN SQUARE.

It might have been
The fluttering petals of a yellow rose
That blew about, so light and gold were those,
Wee wings. Above the hard stone street,
With all its noise and snarl of wheels and feet,
The yellow butterfly went flying,
And, smiling, one still felt like crying,
"Stranger, are you lost here? and do you crave
A friendly guide to beckon on the pave,
Or show you some safe inn?"

When did you come,
And how? Pray, what air line brought you
The journey long in safe condition through
From country meadows to the city's heart?
And, sooth to say, I wonder for my part
What strange ambition moved you, butterfly.
What's the metropolis to you, and why
Scorned you ancestral places still and hid, —
Gentian and fern and golden-rod amid?
But yet, you soft, sweet, silent thing, I could
Not chide; on what errand of special good
You may be sent, I, wond'ring, cannot guess;
So, seeing you lost in the throng, I bless
You ignorantly, and also go my way,
Not unaware that your commission may
Have touched me some."

AS SWALLOWS FLY.

TWILIGHT in pearl and gold
Broods on the Bay ;
Sunset's flame redly burns
Further away.
Ships drop down river ;
A prisoned fire-fly
Harbor light quivers ;
And, dark against sky,
Whirling like autumn leaves
Home fly the swallows ;
Flock after flock gathers
Fleetly and follows.
As swallows fly fearless
And fast from the river,
When the long day of joy
Returns to the Giver,
Warned from their wanderings,
And true to the nest ;
All the heart's hopes and cares
Loose to their rest !
So they shall fly swiftly
With instinct as true
Knowing their abiding
As frail swallows do ;
Not reas'ning, not wond'ring,
But simple, secure,
In Thee, who art Home to us,
Waiting, warm, sure.

As swallows fly far, yet
Unerring, and find
Ere the darkness their covert,
When thus human-kind
Cross swiftly our vision,
Fly past to the west,
Whirling, it seems, like leaves
On, at the best,
Grant, O thou loving Lord,
To guide, even so,
Back to Thy breast at last
All as they go.
Idling or toiling, though
Day long they be,
Thoughtless perhaps, content
Distant from Thee,
Remind them ere dark that
Home they may hie —
O Thou who upbraidest not —
As swallows fly!

AUTUMN COLOR.

SUNSHINE ON YELLOW LEAVES.

THE yellow tree stands shining in the light :
Among its thinning leaves
The morning sunshine climbs, and out and in,
Vine-like, it twines and weaves,

Until for prophet or for king 'twere well
To turn aside and see
This sight — how as a candle lit by day,
Flaring, the yellow tree
Upon th' exhaustless sunshine carelessly
Scatters its duller gold,
And, foolish virgin ! lets its little oil
Waste quickly out, all told.

RAIN ON RED LEAVES.

Upon the misty hills where sullen rain
Weaves cobwebs thick and gray,
How the red tree a deep-hued radiance warm
Lends to the dark, chill day !
Surely, it is a trick of fire-light thrown
Against the storm's bleak spray,
E'en as the dancing flames upon the wall
At twilight flick'ring play !
So the wayfarer hails the cheery tree,
And walks with step more fleet,
Reminded of some hearth as ruddily
That glows, waiting his feet.

UNCONSCIOUS MINISTRY.

WE took the well-known path that led
Across the wood, arched overhead
With boughs now bare. She sighed and said :

“How fast these many days have fled
Away, since last I saw you, dear!
And now that backward looks I take,
I mourn them with a vague heart-ache.
Not that I grieve at growing old,
Not that the memories they hold
Accuse me as an idler quite —
I know I toiled from morn till night —
But yet, so little I have wrought
Worth a remembering, glad thought,
Have left behind in passing on
So few deeds lovable, ‘well done.’”

Thoughtful, I brushed the dead leaves by
Beneath her feet, and for reply
Lifted a sod of moss and mold.
“Will you,” I said, “this brown bosk hold
And give it sun and dew, dear heart,
For me, the while we are apart?”

When next I came the wintry snows
Over our path in great drifts rose.
She showed me, 'neath a crystal case,
The bosk for which I had begged grace.
“It looked so homely then, and dead,
But since see how much life,” she said,
“Has sprung up, crying, ‘I am here!’
Daisy, anemone, and queer
Green shoots from nameless roots; more kinds,
I do believe, than one oft finds

In rambling miles !” — “ Ah ! then indeed,
Last summer's winds some unguessed seed
Brought there, or birds dropped unaware
From out their mouths a morsel rare,
Not noticed and not missed. Now, long
The summer winds, the birds of song
Have flown far south ; yet now behold
These reminiscences the mold
Gives up. And so, dear heart, grieve not ;
You know not all you give. Forgot,
Unrecognized, maybe, by you
Will be the truest good you do.
But where you pass waits — aye nathless,
To take its own from your largess,
The eager Silence that like Earth
Rejects no seed as nothing worth.
Then be content ; smile, spend and grant,
Doing your best deeds ignorant.
You may not pass that way again
Your whole life long — and see, but then
There will be for you sweet surprise
All the more blest in Paradise.”

THE SUNDAY SNOW-STORM.

It seems no more the same loud world without,
The very light is soft ;
So in cathedrals, pale and still and faded,
It filters through the windows, draped and shaded
And colorless, aloft.

And e'en as congregations risen, rev'rent,
In the hush before the hymn,
The Quaker woods stand silent in their places,
All gray save glints between, like children's faces
Where young hemlocks show dim.

Against the church the noiseless snow-flakes flutter;
The people, entering, feel,
As may the vines beneath the light snow's smoothing,
A sense of safety, rest, and wondrous soothing,
Over their spirits steal.

O lovely screen of gently falling snow,
Undazzling, yet so white!
How sweet thine art, whose grace doth intervene
Tired eyes and all the glittering world between,
To rest us from the sight!

It is the day of audience with the King;
We're poor and bare and low;—
As waited barren earth before the snow
Let *us* wait patiently, and silent, know
Our blessing, too, comes so.

IN MEMORIAM.

THE THOUGHT OF HER.

A. B. B.

I.

At thought of her the tender tears
Are troubled from their springs,
Yet stir as weeps the April rain
Her violets that brings,
With health and healing in their wells,
Not bitter, brackish things.

II.

Only it is the getting used
To have one more in Heaven !
It will seem strange and bleak at first,
The daily closeness riven,
And yearning love that wants her back
So easily forgiven !

III.

At thought of her the flickering smiles
Quiver and glimmer too ;

So gracious, beautiful and bright
Her rounded life-time grew! —
Remembering all her ways and words,
As faithful lovers do,

IV.

How vividly they catch the light,
Like embers fanned aglow —
This quaintness or that archness shown
Some day we only know;
An attitude, a look, a gem
Worn *then*, a ribbon *so*; —

V.

A winsome air, a gentle tone,
A kindliness she did,
All fragrant with that sense of her
That could no more be hid
Than subtle lavender or rose
Laid common things amid.

VI.

At thought of her the air grows pure
And tremulous and sweet;
It was a vision perfected,
A lovely life to meet.
Brave woman, wife, and mother crowned
And angel now, beside,
The world is richer that she lived,
And Heaven that she died.

VII.

She died ; — and yet no need to say
 Her memory, — as though
Of us, and our to-day she had
 Forevermore let go,
Left us the past, and would henceforth
 No longer care or know.

VIII.

Can she who here loved lavishly,
 Now only out of sight,
Be colder, more forgetful grown
 There in God's full love-light ?
Oh ! no, we will not count her out,
 Telling the rest good-night.

IX.

Then give we thanks, O Lord, for her
 Gone in Thy faith and fear,
For good she wrought, for seed she sowed
 And left to ripen here,
For all the honor, love, and peace
 That keeps her name so dear ;

X.

But most for this — a legacy
 Such as none other were,
Potent to stay our hearts in stress,
 Uplift us lest we err,
And beckon, beacon-like, to Heaven,
 — The blessed thought of her !

E. M. C.

"So He giveth His beloved sleep."

WHILE yet the dew lay on her life,
A life so glad and new,
While yet along its morning way
The early violets grew,

While yet she kept the sweet child-heart
So trustful and so pure,
Not heavy yet with doubts to solve,
With sore wounds to endure, —

While yet our care could keep her days
Nest-warm from outer cold,
About the tender, cherished one
Enwrapping fold on fold,

Before the path had grown grave-sown,
And chilly with November,
The path that now will ever be
So flower-fair to remember,

Before the slow, deep lines of care
Had graved the forehead's white,
Or lonely, bitter, scorching tears
Had dimmed those eyes of light,

So, even "So" the tender God
Whose her soul was to keep,
Reached through the sunshine down, and gave
To His beloved, sleep.

And we, (but God is pitiful!)
We say, "Unjust! Unjust!"
We would have kept her till she learned
How sunshine turns to rust.

Until she grew, as we have grown,
Footsore with lengthened years;
Till she was worn with strifes and toils,
And tired with griefs and fears,

Till life had grown up-hill and hard,
(As must be, soon or late;)
Oh! heart, be brave; say, had it been
Kinder of God to wait?

He saw our jealous love for her
Could not always prevail:
'Gainst pain, and soil, and stain, sometime
Its watch and ward must fail.

And so, in His unthwarted love,
He led her gently where
There is no weariness to feel,
No ache and loss to bear.

Then heart, poor heart, be comforted;
Since love is deep, so deep,
Thank God that even "So, He gives
To His beloved sleep."

NOVEMBER, 1863.

"THE CRY OF THE HUMAN."

"I am so tired, I am so tired!" — CHARLES SUMNER, *dying*.

SOMETIMES, along the busy street,
With the glad sunlight shining sweet,
While up and down the buyers meet,
And quick steps fleet, and young hearts beat,
And all in best attire are gay,
Life seems awhile less old and gray,
And, after all, a holiday.
But yet, but yet, gift to forget
The moaning to its rhythm set,
Its crying, human undertone,
The deaf or careless only own.
It's like that wailing sound of sea
That sighs beneath eternally,
Though its proud waters marshaled be
To ride, retreat, to march and shine,
Row after row, line after line!
Whatever be life's splendor's show
That aching pulse throbs still below.
Ambition wearies of its goal,
Successes pall, griefs eat the soul;
The singer's voice will choke; the song
Drop half-way in a sob, ere long:
"I am so tired, I am so tired!"

The Lord bends down from heaven an ear
Quick to discern, ready to hear;

And in the mixt, tumultuous cries
From all His murmurous world that rise
Out of sore need, distress, despair,
Appeal, entreaty, plaint or prayer,
How frequent that refrain must beat
Over and over at His feet,
And on and on repeat, repeat,
"I am so tired, I am so tired!"

From hospitals where faded eyes
Count out slow suns that set and rise,
Ah! yes, and many a castle hall,
Or fairy bower, or festive wall,
At twilight with the day's work done,
Midnight, when lone the sands run low,
Or at the height of noonday's glow,
From rooms of toil and homes of ease
Alike have echoed plaints like these,
"I am so tired, I am so tired!"

"I am so tired, I am so tired!"
He said who neared the solemn end,
Great heart, good man and nation's friend.
The long life's fight, the well-worn praise,
The up-hill climb, the stony ways,
The plans with high ambition fired,
Honors deserved, prizes desired,
This prince of statesmen, man of men,
Dropped down and left as simply, then,
As any weary child might say,

Perplexed with work, and tired of play,
"I am so tired, I am so tired!"

And as the mother, bending down,
Lifts up the child that tugs her gown,
So God at last all such doth rest
With that divine exhaustion blest,
Letting as now in His fit time
The good-night for the weary chime,
Releasing bells ring vesper rhyme,
And saying, tenderly and deep,
"Beloved, sleep!"

A MILESTONE.

(JUNE 6, 1869.)

I.

AND so through the sheen of the summer green,
And so through the sun's rare gold
We come where the glimmering way-mark gleams,
And another mile is told.
But vines enwreath it with close caress,
There lamp-like blossoms press,
Till the gray, mossed stone seems a shrine instead,
All good souls pause and bless.

II.

Oh! soft, yet bright is the warm rose-light,
And fragrant the dome of air;

And singing ever the matron river,
Near glideth smooth and fair.
Sing on, sweet oriole tender and true,
Sing out, "Dear Heart, well done!"
For the angels say of her to-day
(I think), "A faithful one!"

III.

She has seen the light of the milestones white
Through darkness and the rain;
She has seen them through the thick, hot mists
Of heaviness and pain,
And yet, though she bore the march foot-sore,
And yet, though along the track
Some lost joys lay dropped on the way,
She swerved not, turned not back.

IV.

Till the twilight late, still the milestones wait,
And silently urge on her feet,
To number the days of her pilgrim ways,
The miles to an end full sweet.
For, looming a shadow upon the day
Or a shimmer upon the night,
Though darkened at whiles in winding defiles
At last they shine in the light,

V.

The lights that a-glow in the windows show
Where a Home and a Host await,

Where the sandals worn, and the garb forlorn,
Shall drop without the gate !
But a moment stay at this milestone gray,
Dear Heart, dear saint of ours,
While fond hands twine, as for holy shrine,
Its wreath of June's young flowers.

WHY STAND YE GAZING UP INTO HEAVEN?

(SAMUEL BOWLES.)

WE know these words austere
Command the troubled spirit well ;
And we to-day who hear
Them plain as when of old they fell,
Like to the men of Galilee
Would best turn silent ; — go
Our way to noble toil, as he
Now vanished, did, below.

But if, — but if one might
Dare answer back the angel men,
The full heart lifted quite
Past fear as past redemption, — then
Would we not make reply, —
We gaze up after him because
We dread to let our eye
Down on that lone place where he was !

We stand and gaze because
Here was no common passing ; here
Was such a one as awes
The faithless e'en to hope or fear
An unseen Heaven vast
Enough to furnish wider spheres
Than this soul's scope, and last
Sufficing, endless years.

So can we help but gaze ?
Wondering what is the high employ
Now his ; what friends ; what ways
Transcendent to fill up his joy ; —
Yet gaze as if to send
One more word after him, or gain
One look back from the friend,
To whom our hearts unsaid remain !

And it may be not least
Of ministries a hero leaves
Upon his kind increast,
That when he goes, who grieves
Not only grieves, but thrilled
And startled as bereaven
Must lift dulled eyes that earth has filled,
Must gaze up after him to Heaven.

HE GIVETH SLEEP.

THE time of gifts had almost come,
Kept in His name again

Who captive leads captivity
And giveth gifts to men.
Full many hands, full many hearts,
With loving zeal and thought
Their tokens rich and rare had planned,
Their tributes fair had wrought.

There is one gift no man can get,
No mortal can bestow ;
It is not his to take, to give,
Nor yet to time, although
It may be Love's supremest prayer
For those most dear. On sweep
Of soundless wings that gift comes down, —
God's gift ; — He giveth sleep.

Not one high-beating heart whose wish
That gift-day saw fulfilled
Was raptured like the blessed heart
Which on that day lay stilled ;
The long road past, the waiting done,
Pain merged in resting deep : —
Oh ! none can choose and none can give
Like Him who giveth sleep.

CHRISTMAS EVE, 1879.

S. N. B.

(1881.)

WE needed her ; we fully knew
All she could be, all she could do ;

So soon recalling her to dwell
In Paradise, doeth He well?

He doeth well. He giveth her
This honor, this great chance, Transfer;
Transfer, where the strong mind and will,
Promoted, higher posts shall fill;
Her great capacities be brought
Where only they can as they ought
Developed be; where her delight
In happiness shall have it's right.
It will be but "a little while"
Till she, with her own heartsome smile,
Will prove to us 'twas so; will say
What glories with each added day
To her by this Transfer befell,
And how the best He wrought will tell
Who doeth well, for her did well.

THE REQUIEM BELLS.

English cathedral bells toll for Garfield. The Elberon chapel bell tolled,
but could scarcely be heard above the noise of the sea.

I.

THEY toll those deep cathedral bells
Beyond Atlantic's ceaseless swells;
Toll, toll their measured, mournful knells,
O'er our hope once so bright, now dim!

Like tears that answer, dropping slow
In sympathy, a common woe,
Those solemn bells throb in outgo,
There half across the world from him.

II.

Why wilt thou not, O sounding sea,
Forbear to toss so noisily ?
Fain would we list those rev'rend bells
That voice their tender thought and prayer
Who pity us. O, hush, for there
Tolls our near chapel bell ; we bear
Our holy dead. Hush for the bells !

III.

Vainly the sea, lashing the shore,
Like Death, like Time, do we implore ;
But, till the ocean is no more
And Time's long restlessness is o'er,
In hearts where love and honor dwell
Still vibrant shall those far bells be,
And men shall love, both sides the sea,
To tell, in Christ's own charity
How tolled those deep cathedral bells.

RELIGIOUS POEMS.

THE MASTER'S WORK-WOMEN.

ADDRESSED TO THE DAUGHTERS OF THE
CHURCH.

I.

THERE stretches out before my gaze a canvas large
and fair ;
A perfect pattern, outlined by the Master's hand,
lies there ;
The fruit, the flowers, the light and shade, in won-
drous mingled dyes,
And intricate design, are spread beneath attractive
eyes.

II.

They bend them to this broidery, they whom His
gesture won
To count obedience more sweet than idling in the
sun ;
They cannot see the whole vast plan ; each only
does what part
The Master says, setting her stitch with child-like,
docile heart.

III.

Who holds the scroll? for noiselessly, with firm,
 resistless touch,
The finished part is rolled away, and, year by year,
 so much
Of added pattern as He wills, the great designer
 lends;
Oh! none, no, none may see the whole till the long
 labor ends.

IV.

I see them talk among themselves, the broiderers
 that still
Address them to the task; they name that conse-
 crated skill,
That strength of courage, that high faith to toil and
 persevere,
Which first a few brought to the work—O blessed
 names and dear!

V.

I see them speak most lovingly, and with a tender
 awe
Of others in whose stint, nigh done, their eyes can
 see no flaw;
The tendrils wrought with life-long pains almost
 transfigured show;
Only a few more stitches now; then these shall rise
 and go,
And from their labors rest; their works do follow
 them, we know.

VI.

And, of the curious that scan the masterpiece, some
throw
A careless look, some scoff; some smile; some
marvel as they go;
Look nearer; this is tapestry that bears a closer ken,
And teaches deeper things than all the studied arts
of men.

VII.

Behold this leaf, this single leaf, half hidden under-
neath
The growth luxuriant of embossed garlanding and
wreath;
But little time she had who wrought this humble
part; yet would
Upon it lavish all her love, and hath done what she
could,

VIII.

'Neath hands that faltered not, behold, what fault-
less sprays, along
The rich breadths lie!—But here, a place picked
out;—here, stitches wrong.
Ah, well!—yet tears of penitence dropped there;
the dear Lord shows
To his work-women alchemy most heavenly in those.

IX.

Note now, this branch begun. How exquisite its
grace, how well

Wrought out at first! Then, on the worker's hand
at length there fell
A weariness that made her sigh, half fretful, "Let
me rest" —
She did not heed the Teacher's gentle warning, "Is
it best?"

X.

Long rest she took; and long with patience He
awaited her
Who kept her place, though many better fit to fill it
were;
At last with one sharp word He called her back:
He would not see her slothful slumber utterly her
loss and ruin be.

XI.

Wakened indeed, she takes the threads once more,
startled and sore;
Alas! how changed that harmony of hues, her pride
before!
They faded while she slept — poor broiderer! why
did'st thou choose
Such time for sleep? This faded work none but thy
Lord could use.

XII.

Not with His dearest looks of love, not His best
words of praise,
The Master looks on difficult or showy parts always;

Not always to the capable, the fearless and the fleet
He speaks His "well done," for He adds "thou
faithful" when 'tis meet.

XIII.

How grander with increasing time the noble pattern
wide,
And wider still its boughs throw out and spread on
ev'ry side !
How, to fulfil its broadening scope that ever plainēr
stands,
Come loving toilers more and more with ready
hearts and hands !

XIV.

The Master looks ; He counts you o'er ; He notes
you each to-day
Who to His church are pledged ; to aid all willing
women may ;
Then, courage ! though a heavy heart sometimes to
toil you bear, —
Courage ! though anxious and perplexed ; courage !
though small thy share,
" 'Content' to fill the lowest place, and think of
Jesus there."

XV.

Can anything a woman's heart touch with such sure
appeal
As being needed ? — Then fail not, O woman heart !
to feel

That now the Master wistfully your handiwork doth
seek,
As though He needed you :— canst fail entreaties
made so meek ?

XVI.

He needs not all to work alike ; for each one's way
He'll care ;
There is no woman so unskilled but she can help
• somewhere ;
Ye workers of the buds give them ; ye who do leaf
and stem
Fear not but in the mighty whole the Lord hath
need of them.

XVII.

Fear but one thing ; that when at last ye see that
mighty whole
Before the angels, before men, unroll a finished
scroll,
Ye miss some flower or leaf left out that might have
been your task,
And cry, " I disappointed Him ; in vain I let Him
ask."

THE TIE THAT BINDS.

" No more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and
of the household of God."

THE gentle Sister in quiet ward three,
As distant clocks tolled midnight heavily,

Noted a patient, restless sigh and stir ;
But, half across the floor she paused. Of
Her unconscious, the sick man tried to sing
An old psalm in his sleep, that quivering
Rose, sank and dropped midway ; she only caught
“*How sweet the name*”—yet with such meaning
fraught

Those few, faint words that she no stranger spoke,
When with a start and groan the sleeper woke.

“You are in pain ?” she said, and with skilled touch
Bathed the hot head ; “Not that, not that so much ;
I dreamed, I think, of home, and singing air
To the old tunes we used of Sundays there.
It’s the more hard to wake a stranger here,
Stranger and foreigner, with not one near
Of kin or countryman.”

The sick man’s eyes,
Dull and distressed looked up. By love made wise,
The Sister softly answered, “Friend, I’m fain
To tell you tales, as to a child in pain.

“A foundling babe, adopted by a great
And worthy lord, arrived at man’s estate,
Found quenchless yearnings in himself arise
To know what country his had been ; what ties
Of parentage. At last his lord’s command
Sent him commissioned forth to a far land,
And, pondering still his missing name and race,
He reached on errands grave the destined place.

“ ‘Hail, fellow-citizen!’ a laborer cried,
And carelessly brushed by. The stranger sighed,
‘Whose fellow-citizen am I? how glad
Were I with e’en this laborer’s kinship had!’
‘Hail, fellow-citizen!’ courteous, grave,
Spake one of rev’rend mien across the pave.
‘Am I indeed so like these people then?’
The stranger wondered, startled much again.
But when, unquestioning, in shop and street
They called him fellow-citizen, a sweet,
Half-frightened hope grew stronger in his mind,
His nationality here, now, to find.
At last kind chance confirmed the hope past doubt.
Then, while he wrought his lord’s commission out,
How light his added task along the way
Through summer noontides and through winter day,
Where’er he went, his countrymen and kin
To learn of and discover. For within
No single place his wide-spread, noble folk
Abode. He knew not when a morning broke
What new friend he might find ere night, or where
The bond of lineage he traced might bear
His footsteps. Sometimes in castles came
He unawares upon a lord whose name
Showed him of like descent, who glad confest
The tie, and entertained with all his best
This kinsman guest; sometimes ’neath humblest
roof
The same ‘Hail fellow-citizen!’ brought proof
Of close alliance.
So, always cheered and fed

The traveler, with thankful spirit said,
 'Now, what a Master mine is! 'Tis well worth
 On errands for Him wand'ring through the earth,
 Else truly I could never e'en begin
 To know my countrymen and next of kin.
 Thus eased forevermore lonely regret,
 In families the solitary set.'
 Ah, friend! e'en so thy speech betrayeth thee,
 (She ended), fellow-citizen to be;
 Thou shalt not lack for kin and countrymen:—
 Related by a Name most royal when
 One seeks for kinsfolk verily he finds;
 Blest is the tie that binds!"

JESUS, MY SUN, MY LIFE, MY LIGHT.

JESUS, my Sun, my Life, my Light,
 Arise and shine
 Into this close and shady life,
 This life of mine,

This life that lies so low and damp,
 And yet, may be
 Made pure and high, made golden-glad,
 Dear Lord, in Thee.

Shine in this soul that like a child
 Cries in the dark!
 Lonely and shivering and cold,
 I wait, I hark!

I wait for Thy rejoicing beams,
Thy presence dear,
That shall withdraw all dread and pain,
All doubt and fear ;

That shall give perfectness of strength,
Beauty and power,
Thine own, O Christ ! wherewith to meet
Each trying hour ;

That shall give all of growth and gain
I, helpless, need ;
That shall my famished, fevered heart
With fulness feed.

Jesus, my Sun, my Life, my Light,
Arise and shine !
Lowly and penitent I wait
Thy light divine.

SUNDAY, June 2, 1867.

STRAIT AND NARROW.

I SAW one who turned at a warning word,
And owned, "The saying is true ;
There is no continuing city here ;
I will seek that, far and new,
Which hath foundations, and dureth for aye,
As with my might I've striven
For the crumbling earth and its fleeting gains,
Now will I strive for heaven."

With that he came fast to the Wicket Gate,
And found it a humble gate,
Not a royal arch as for conquerors,
But lowly, and plain and strait.
A cobweb hung even across the latch,
Quivering light in the wind,
For narrow and strait is the way of life,
And so few there be that find.

When he stood erect at the lowly gate
And knocked, admittance to win,
A voice said, "Except as a little child
None ever can enter in."
Then he waited long before next he knocked,
Till saying, "So be it then,"
He stooped to be low as a little child
And timidly knocked again.

Freely the gate swinging open stood wide ;
Still not yet he entered in
For fain he as well had carried and kept
Some load of long-treasured sin,
Some righteousness Self had carefully wrought,
Some praise that Self yet might win ;
And the open gate was by far too strait
Thus cumbered to let him in.

The reckoning balanced, he counted loss
All else he could have or do,
And stripped of all trappings, a naked soul,
With empty hands pressed he through,

On the King's highway where the holy steps
Of the King himself have been,
Through the self-same gate that He hath ordained,
Entering, entering in !

And last, far across the thick river damp,
I saw a great gate ajar,
All glorious garnished with precious stones,
And shining like any star,
With bright watching faces that looked out glad,
While echoes of music rang
So raptured that never a mortal ear
Could copy the song they sang.

I saw the pilgrim pass joyous beyond,
Trembling and afraid no more ;
So one might cross to the household within
A sweet home's familiar door.
What weighed the journey's short weariness then,
Or the way-side warfare's din ?
Through the gate to the City Eternal
He had entered, entered in.

But before the darkness closed in once more
I looked for the Wicket Gate ;
I marked it lying just over against,
Lowly, and humble, and strait.
And still a cobweb across the latch hung,
Quivering light in the wind,
For narrow and strait is the way of life,
And so few there be that find.

BELLS OF CHRISTMAS MORNING.

In the night I heard them crying,
Falling into mournful sighing,
Answering with faint replying,

“Lo! these nineteen hundred years
We have sung at sweet Christ-tide,
Throwing out our hope world-wide,
Peace! Peace! O Earth that hears!

“Peace! Peace! beneath the star
That, lamp-like, guides afar

Those eastward pilgrims gray!
Gifted, empowered as never were.
Choice balsams of the fir,
Their frankincense and myrrh,
Poured at the feet of her
Who holds the wondrous Child.
Down through ages dark and wild,
The ragged wounds of strife
With very balm of life
Shall heal, and shall allay.

“Good-will! good-will! we cried:
No more of wrath or pride
Or traffic’s noisy cumber
To break the gentle slumber

Of this new-born Babe-King.
Brothers beside the manger,
Know not outcast nor stranger,
But cordial right hand bring.

“Yet these nineteen hundred years
We aloft have seen deaf ears
Turned to widows’, orphans’ tears ;
We have seen the heart-sick fears
 Of the scorned and desolate !
We have seen the tyrant’s heel
Grind warm flesh beneath its steel ;
We have seen the starving die,
And the brother standing by
Show no pity in his eye ;
 Friend fail friend and mate stab mate.
We this voice are weary lifting
O’er the masses shifting, drifting,
That but spurn the royal gifting.”

On the air I caught the echo
Of their grieving, sad and hollow,
 While they waited, watchmen olden.
I looked down with solemn sorrow,
I looked up some cheer to borrow
For the yet delayed to-morrow,
 Where the Eastern star hung golden.

All the night I sat a-wondering ;
All the night I sat a-pondering ;
But when dawn’s white rose made room,
Budding mutely through the gloom,
I, the sexton, rose up cheerful,
And to all the weak and tearful
Bade the bells their message carry,
On their errand make no tarry.

For I said: "Strike true! strike true!
So men yet shall learn of you
To sing in tune upon your key.
And, though no list'ning ear should be,
Still at the glory of the news
Can ye joyful voice refuse?
Oh, for its beauty, for its grace,
Dance and sing, each in his place!"

They together all cried out,
With a loud, ecstatic shout,
And the rapture of their lay
Thrilled through dreams of restless sleepers,
Thrilled through watch of vigil-keepers,
Checked the tear of many a weeper,
Bringing many a purer, deeper
Greeting to the Lord's Birth-day:

"Peace! Good-will! the Prince now born
Comes unto the lost, forlorn,
Leaves that royal house, the King's,
Leaves its choirs of holy rest,
Leaves his guests, the pure, the blest,
And for our need doth condescend
A remedy divine to lend;
Wake Earth, O wake and sing!"

TWO TOILERS.

"LADY, sitting in silken gear,
Up in your chamber height,

Lay sunshine in a golden web
Across your floor to-night?
For sure your threads were all of gold,
I saw their glimmer fall
Through your fingers, and cast a gleam
Upon your pictured wall."

"Alas! but heavy hearted still,
I see along the West,
Day's white sail vanish dreamily
Over the darkness' crest.
For scant, and poor, the freight all told
I have sent out therein;
Though rich, and full, and splendid heaped,
I hoped it would have been.

"For clumsy weaving tarnished oft
The gleaming treasure gold;
And my best arts but left it there
Faded, and dull, and old.
Sometimes tears dimmed my vision, so
I only could work slow;
Or the tears dropping rusted sore
The burnished, yellow glow.

"Oh! may we not with weary eyes,
Friend, fold our hands and weep,
When it is growing late for work,
And almost time to sleep?
For we are but vain toilers all,
Each in his empty way;

And life's best gold is set with gloom,
And Heaven's far away."

"Toiler, sitting in humble garb,
Down in your shady room,
Patient have I seen you bending
Over your busy loom ;
I have caught no sheen of golden,
Glinting, glad and gay —
Naught for your daily store to weave,
But dull and quiet gray.

"Toiler, like a warm wing-shelter
Comes darkness brooding o'er ;
Resting in the soothing shadow,
Sit now within thy door ;
Tell me how through the light's delay
You wove your stint to-day,
Out of that gloomy, shady store,
Your dim and dusky gray ?"

"God cares to have, (I guess not why,
And yet so I believe)
In His fair world — the dusty web
That even spiders weave.
There must be reason then to think
He needs the poor, pale gray ;
And so I weave it carefully,
And simply trust He may.

"And sometime in a glad surprise,
As if by chance inrolled,

Shining from out the dusk I find
Even a thread of gold.
How richly forth it shines ere while
Set in my homely woof;
And like a crown glows out so grand
Beneath my humble roof!

“I am content to fold my hands,
Now, at the still night-fall;
God sets no soul to work for naught,
Nor cheats one of us all
With wasted toil; we work His will
Each in his dif’rent way;
And e’en life’s gray has in it gold,
Nor is Heav’n far away.”

BARTIMEUS.

I HEARD the tramping feet of multitudes
There, where I sat and begged from out the pleni-
tude
Of Scribe and Pharisee some crumbs of piteous
dole;
I heard — a throbbing torture shook my soul.

“O God! it is too dreadful, shut from any vision
By bars of iron darkness to a strong prison,

Thus to sit, strained with listening, hearkening to
these feet

That beat, beat, beat all day upon the echoing
street!

“Meek lashes never lifting from my cheek,
To listen, listen steps of strong or weak!
It grows, to tortured sense, a flail so sore,
Might seem they trod my living flesh, nor hurt me
more!”

I heard the tramping, eager multitude,
Yet marked but murmurous swell; no outcry rude;
There was some low voice, reverent, when I asked
them why:

“Jesus of Nazareth, is it, passeth by.”

Then all my being leaped with raptured hope,
As if some soul that passed afraid, found Heaven
ope:—

Then all my being anguished for one word—
And would not stop to doubt, and *would* be heard.

Quick! quick!—I cried aloud, nor could delay,
Cared not for clamor, fain to bid me stay.
The world seemed sole, between this Man and me,
Beggard and blind was I,—Lord and Physician he.

O, the felt pathos of the unseen look!
O, gracious lovingness the low voice took!
“*What wilt thou?*”—and I prayed my prayer,
At His feet then. He knows my heart brake there!

BROOKLYN, March 3, 1870.

THE HIDDEN COMFORTER.

COMPLAINT.

I WONDER why,
When, by my loneliness made restless, I
Stumble on without aim it seems, struck blind
And wildered, leaving some dear grave behind,
That I no comfort find; that I but hear
Those who speak round me with a dulled, sick ear,
And cannot see nor feel the One from Whom
We've hope, they say, even beside the tomb.
Oh! if indeed, Christ helps and succors such,
Why is He hid when I need Him so much?

REPLY.

I wonder why
When heart-sick, disappointed, heavily,
Two men bereaven, late one dreary day,
Towards Emmaus plodded on their dusty way,
Their Lord, who came so close to them and
talked,
Hid his identity, and as they walked
Kept back the knowledge that should change their
grief
To all the rapture of supreme relief,
And make their doubting hearts unearthly glad
When they should know what company they had.

I think we cannot help but wonder why—
Blame us not, Master, for that wistful sigh!—

And yet, we know, of old, their Master was
Beside them, and not there the less because
The mourners, slow of vision, did not know
Till afterwards; somehow He chose it so:
Dear soul, then no more sadly needest thou
Doubt the same Comforter is near thee now,
And though it seems so strange and hard to thee
That He should hidden from perception be,
Hush! do not try
Just yet to find out why.

I wonder why
We fear; think'st thou that Jesus even yet
His tears for Lazarus can and doth forget?
While He remembers them will He e'er leave
A mourner of us all alone to grieve?
Despair not even at thine own despair,
Or the chill blank and absence ev'rywhere,
For One who understands is near, does know.
As you walk and are sad He seeks you most.
For what would they at last have missed or lost
That walk which at the first was hard to bear?
So when He makes thee (as He will), aware
How close He is, dear soul, thou'lt not complain
He thee unreasonably kept in pain,
Nor say He was mistakenly too slow
In letting thee the hid Companion know,
Nor longer wonder why.

IT DOTH NOT YET APPEAR WHAT WE
SHALL BE.

“ I TREMBLE at the thought of Heaven,”

She said. He wondered why.

“ At Heaven? whose glories make us glad,
And more than glad to die?”

He asked her, puzzled, half-displeased.

Her dreamy eyes along

The distant hills looked forth; “ I know,”

She said, “ the raptured song

That holy souls have tried to make

Of Heaven; how they say

‘Thou hast no shore, fair ocean,

Thou hast no time, bright day;

With jasper glow thy bulwarks,

Thy streets with emeralds blaze,

The sardius and the topaz

Unite in thee their rays,’ —

I know —

But I, who am no saint inspired,

But I, who never had

More than a common life to live,

Nor much to make me glad,

Nor grand experiences that dig

Deep channels in the soul,

How shall I bear this Heaven’s vast

Ecstatic, perfect whole?

Perfection? I cannot conceive

Perfection, and I fear,

You see, I could not take it in.

Because, I'm so used here
To tempered pleasures and small flaws
In all my dearest things,
That to its full capacity

Joy in me never swings.
What if the splendid, perfect Heaven
Found me thus lacking ; such
I could not comprehend it all,
And could not bear so much ?

Like this, maybe : a man born deaf
Hears suddenly ; and, lo,
The first breath in the world of sound
His opened ears shall know,
Comes thrilling from an orchestra ; —
Perfect ? Oh, yes ! — and yet,
The man might swoon beneath the shock
His startled nerves have met, —
I am afraid."

" I thank you for that word," he said ;

" There *is* another sense ;
We miss it (so I think) always
Until we do go hence.

We know there is another power
Though not whether its tense
Is that we *might have* or *shall have* .

This unknown sense, from whence
We hope as great things, surely,
As the kitten ten days old,
When her blind eyes, finding their use,
To light delayed, unfold.

And so perhaps this dormant sense,
Not needed until then,
May be the very thing vouchsafed
To bear the glory, when
The righteous in the kingdom shine,
And He in garments white
Sits on the throne whom none can see
And live to bear the sight.
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,
Those things he doth prepare,
Perhaps because, until that sense,
The look they could not bear.
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard —
Oh, no ! not yet, not yet, —
But rest ; but wait ; anticipate ;
And, waiting, do not let
Your heart be troubled ! Your man, deaf,
Not at the sound would start
And marvel, but the new-found sense,
The faculty, his heart
Would fill with joy unspeakable,
And on its own strong wings
He would be borne above himself,
Above all lesser things.
The hospitality of Heaven
Will not make earth's mistakes.
When a tired, timid woman, strange,
Upon that threshold wakes,
It will not be with blare of full
Processionals they meet
And honor her. With tender touch,

Tones very low and sweet,
Ways home-like she can understand,
As there before she'd been,
I think they will come softly forth
And silent lead her in, —
And lead her in, to see the face
That anywhere would be
The one thing making Heaven home,
Heaven to you, to me."

THE BESETTING SIN.

[Peter said unto Jesus, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times, but until seventy times seven.]

BRETHREN, I ain't a saint, but the Lord knows I
want to be good!
I couldn't have said that once, nor had any thought
that I should;
It's somethin' a man can't tell, it's somethin' spoke
down into him,
This change that come to me, brethren, and filled
my heart to the brim.

When I found 'twas true about Him, true about his
lovin' me,
Lovin' me honest, airnest, — oh, think on't! me jest
as I be! —

Well, I did want, if I could, to please him, by tryin'
my best
To be all he'd like to have me, and just lettin' go
the rest.

So I tried ; — 'twas poor ! — but I tried. And breth-
ren, if anythin'
Ever stuck like a pison weed it was that besettin'
sin !
If it hadn't been for that ! When I'd think 'twas
rooted out
Time an' agin springin' up, sarsy, to put me sore
about.

I got so ashamed and sore, and I felt so tired out
and beat,
That I said, "It's mean to come beggin' always
about His feet
Like a coward, crouchin' dog that knows he's ben
a doin' wrong ;"
So I left off sayin' prayers for a little while along.

It grew so I couldn't bear it. The Lord took pity
on me
And sent — no sign nor wonder, but enough to make
me see.
The minister read in church on how many times to
forgive ;
It flashed through me in a minute — I began again
to live.

So this is the kind of Master we have, this the way
that He
Would past all reason have us forgive, keep for-
givin', thinks me ;
What! o'er and o'er the one same thing, seventy
times in a day ?
As oft in the day as the sinner, of us "Forgive!"
will pray.

And what can our paltry seven, what can our long
suff'rin' be
Beside the Lord that's never done forbearin' infi-
nitely ?
Seventy upon seven times—in God, what may that
mean ?
Has patience e'er the end of that multiplication
seen ?

Don't it sound so? I didn't doubt it; I cried out
"Forgive!" right there ;
When we can't look God in the face, still he tires
not of our prayer ;
It seems too good to be true ; do you think, though,
I've got it right ?
If I have it makes life seem hopeful, it makes my
heart beat light.

As I said, I want to be good, and to try to conquer
all
My evil ways. When, still, by this one so easy sin
I fall

Till I am shamefaced o'er and o'er, if I jest as oft
may cry,
"Forgive!" and be forgiven — Thank God! — I'll
try until I die.

THE KING'S GARDEN.

ONE lovely day in every seven
We walk in the King's garden ;
From opening of the eastern gate
Till shuts the western gate we wait
And walk in the King's garden.

We leave the looms, the noise, the whirl,
The fabrics we are weaving :
We leave the needle in its seam,
Idle, untouched, to lie and gleam,
We plowing leave, or sheaving.

We bring within it haggard eyes
Sometimes, and weary faces
And hands toil-worn, and torn and brown —
Some angel coming unseen down,
These surface-marks erases.

We bring within it sorrowing souls ;
We bring in, each, his cross :
Some weights of care that press and cling,
And some mournful foreshadowing
Of coming dearth and loss.

But oh ! the gracious King
Who meets and helps us here !
Where burdens chafe, He lifts :
With clearer sight He gifts
To banish faithless fear.

How tender bends the sky above
This garden of our King !
How snowy-pure the blossoms blow,
What healing fruits do thereon grow,
What chorals the birds sing !

O sweet, sweet garden of the King !
We love, we cherish thee !
We leave without, defiling things ;
The soul of her great Sovereign sings !
From earth-chains would be free :

And in the quiet joys to dream
Of that fair, waiting shore
Where soon, at her Beloved's side
Blest above thought, she shall abide,
Abide forevermore.

NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH.

I.

THE woman sat by and spun
From dawn till the day was done,
With a red rose in her hair ;
She knew she was blithe and fair,

She knew she had strength and youth,
But nothing she had, in sooth,
Brought with its subtle grace
The eager light to her face,
The expectancy to her eyes.
"I look for some dear surprise,
Some word of the Lord come true
In a wondrous rapture new,"
She sang, as she gazed away
Through her crystal pane each day,
"For surely I must believe
That the good Lord would not leave
Souls made to live forever,
To stay here years and never
Guess by some token given
What He can mean by Heaven;
It will then be all so new,
How can we know what to do
Unless we have here some clue?
Glorious promises wide
He makes to His own, beside,"
She said, so half heard by her
The terms of the promise were.

But while she thus dreamed and spun,
Day, day after day begun;
While she still dreamed on and spun,
Day, day after day was done.
The swifter she bravely wrought,
For smiling, the while she thought

Of that Guest in royal guise,
And how in her best she'd rise
To lead him the threshold o'er,
Flinging wide the carven door.
Not the door by which she sped
To the sick child's lonely bed ;
Not the gate that nearest led
To the widow's house ; instead
Her stateliest, hard to ope
To ardors even of hope ;
If long it were kept unstirred,
Through delays of joy deferred ;
So anon she left the loom
Alone in the shady room,
To tug at the bars — all dust,
To pull at the lock — all rust.

Would it be by morning light ?
Would it be at noon's warm height ?
The year must be bright and gay,
The birds keeping holiday ;
Before such coming as this
Nothing must be amiss —
Yet the sunshine 'gainst the shade
Briefer and briefer stayed ;
The woodbine above the door
Flamed fate, and then flamed no more.
“ O my Guest ! then must it be
Thy feet never cross to me
To interpret Heaven, while
Here I bide in long exile ? ”

Still the world went by, went by,
And no step, no step drew nigh.

II.

The woman sat by and spun,
And her stint was nearly done ;
Through the glass she watched no more,
And now even grief was o'er,
For patience replaced the pain
That had wept " In vain, in vain ! "
White was her hair ; she was old ;
Late now was the year and cold ;
But waiting upon her face
Had wrought a wonderful grace,
Like light from some higher place.

Through her door, despised and poor,
At dusk a step on the floor
She thought made a gentle stir ;
" The widow would talk with her,
Or the sick child send, may be,"
And she scarce looked up to see,
Expecting glad news no more,
Setting naught by that low door ;
But the splendor thrilled her through,
And her dreams at last were true.
" Oh ! I knew," she cried, " I knew
It must be right to believe
That the good Lord would not leave
Souls made to live forever,
To stay here so, and never

Guess by a token given
What He can mean by Heaven !

Is it not Thy very will
The messenger shall fulfill
Now, dear Lord, upon my head
The promises Thou hast said ? ”
A voice majestic she heard :
“ It shall be fulfilled, my word,
And that I said shall increase —
I said, ‘ I will give you Peace. ’ ”

A TESTIMONY.

O FRIEND ! who art doubting, and mistrusting the
light

E'en while thou art passionately praying for sight,
Who art groping about with wild, sorely-bruised
hands,

And “ cannot understand,” you say ; — God under-
stands !

Your despair the most intricate He'll yet make clear,
Will “ lighten your darkness,” disperse every fear,
Create your whole tired-out life and spent soul anew ;
He has done it for me ; He will do it for you.

O Friend ! who art standing all perplexed in thy way,
Knowing not how to turn, full of helpless dismay

That thy road seems cut off both behind and before,
God has planned for you ready some wide-open door
That He knows all about, though you have not the clue ;
He will guide you as safely on as though you knew :
You will wonder to find all His words coming true ;
He has done it for me ; He will do it for you.

Friend who sharply art suffering, and by the smart
Of the rod art bewildered, until thy own heart
Makes strange-sounding replies, like a traitorous thing,
And applies to thy wounds but a more caustic sting,
Now the Lord shall fight for you and you shall be still ;
At rest He'll enfold you, deep within His will ;
Will uplift you and bear you victorious through ;
He has done it for me ; He will do it for you.

It is easy for God, it is easy for Him
To reveal so His glory, though our eyes are dim,
Out of midnight confusion, and chaos that we
Would call ruin, evokes He love, light, liberty ;
He is, then, at no loss for one soul that doth share
In its weakness that might by abiding His care,
And His might will be gentle to you as the dew ;
He has done it for me ; He will do it for you.

GONE TO GROW UP IN HEAVEN.

Not linked with one harder name than this
Let their sweet names be given ;
Say only that they have gone in peace
Gone to grow up in Heaven.
Not easily girl-children mature
To be perfect women here ;
Through many a hurt they learn their part,
And many a secret tear ;
Their wisest guides can make sore mistakes,
Even while they guide they fear ;
But there how gloriously they teach,
How wondrously they'll rear,
Who joyed in their many mansions o'er
These pupils, as they drew near,
Summoned in by the Lord of the place,
Because he *held them* so dear.
We had here their sunny childhood full
Of the beautiful and free
As Love could render it. Love canst now
For their sakes still stronger be.
A mother will often smile down brave,
Her exiled and aching heart,
And from her children in distant lands
Consent to be long apart,
That they high knowledge may gain, and be
Best trained in all costly lore ;
Dear mother-heart, by thy lonesome grief,
The Master must mean no more,

'Tis only to Heav'nly schools He takes
These little ones you so miss,
To make them in that fair realm, what they
Could never quite be in this.
So, although your heavy days move slow,
Oh! reckon how each doth bring
New powers to them, new gifts, new joys,
New strength of unwearied wing.
And every hour enriches them
By some added, precious thing;
Yes, night and day let the fancies shape
Into hopes more clear and true
Of the skilled ways in which angels teach,
And the children, what they do,
What characters full of strength they make,
What graces divine grow to.
Oh! look at thyself not solely then
As stricken and bereaven,
But think how lovely, how safe, your girls
Are growing up in Heaven!

HEARTSEASE.

HUSH, darling, in this hour's heart-break;
Oh! cry not out with pain, and take
Life's name in vain, and bitter make
A mock of what it is to live,
Saying, "Life has not that to give
Can make me that I am forgive!"

Peace, darling, peace ; for let us be
At least wise as when, children, we
Stopped tears at fairy tales : hear me : —

I know not where the beds of heartsease grow,
Yet they be somewhere, I undoubting know,
Across me so at whiles their perfumes blow.
It is not when sweet hopes laugh out with bloom,
At sunny morning, in some favorite room
I scent the heartsease, but through twilight gloom.

Or at high noon after a long, rough road
While still I bear along my weary load
Whose iron presses, yet doth not corrode —

Ethereal faint, then o'er my soul opprest
Blows tenderly that breath of comfort blest,
And changes all the air, and bids me rest.

Therefore I know that beds of heartsease grow,
And herbs of healing for us all ; and so
There must be love and providence, although
As yet we do not see them where we go.

So I'll believe the best I can of life,
Believe it has a balm after the knife,
Believe in heart's ease mingling with the strife
That else with heartlessness alone were rife.

And while I wait those heartsease beds to see,
The more that with some spirit ministry

Their handling without hands doth comfort me,
I dream on what their native place must be,

Making it fairer than our fairest Mays
With best of purple nights, of golden days ;
Thus to beguile all present barren ways.

OUT IN THE RAIN.

WOULD you know, if you met in the street,
Do you think, God's messenger fleet,
Bearing His word to some needy soul,
For lifting or making it whole ?

Did you know him ? the late autumn rain
Beat and throbbed like slow pulses of pain,
And hushed as a close sick-room's air
Windy forest and harvest-field bare.

He had small, dusty feet, plump and brown,
Ragged straw for an aureole crown,
Wilful curls of the loveliest hair,
White brow gleaming childish and fair.

And no harm if you smiled, dear, I know,
At the parasol held up, as though
Safe and sober, the little wise head
Were so consciously well-bested.

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“AND STOOD AT HIS FEET, WEEPING.” 103

Had some freak of the lightning been sent
To turn it so battered and rent? —
Lo! this was the minister quaint,
No hero, philosopher, saint.

But the message went safe where 'twas sent,
For a heart under faithless care bent
Paused to look where the little child led,
And clearly and legibly read:

Thou who fearest the Lord's gracious rains,
Oh! what if thy plans and thy pains
Under which thou wouldst deem safe to rest
Are but leaky umbrellas at best?

With what infinite toil you would spread
Protective devices o'erhead!
Perhaps at the sight, angels may
Smile gently, as you did to-day;

Since they know that our wisest schemes gain
For us oft but complacency vain;
Yet that God, when they fail, the dark day,
Will take care of us all His own way.

“AND STOOD AT HIS FEET, BEHIND HIM,
WEEPING.”

THE tears that grieved children shed upon a mother's
breast,
How blest!

Else, could we understand how “as a mother comforteth (He said)
We should be comforted?”

The tears that fall at Joy’s strong touch, and sweet,
compelling stress
Of blessedness,
How sweet are they! for few the hours that, set o’er
life supreme and high,
They glorify!

And yet, to weep — to weep is yet more blest, is yet
more sweet
At Jesus’ feet.
And tears that then shall drip, shall not be *weakly*
vain,
Nor leave a stain.

We know that tears must fall in this low, under-life,
Tears rife
With pain, with anguish, with unrest, with aching
weariness
And bitterness.

It is not safe within one’s self to grieve and pour
out hot, hot tears —
O’er wasted years;
O’er lonely graves, o’er poisoned springs, o’er that
dead babe, the “Might Have Been,”
O’er fondled sin.

Then take them not away, O weeper, whoso'er thou
art,

To rust thine heart ;
But let them here bedew His sacred feet, of whom
the record still is kept,
That Jesus wept.

If there be not for thee one human breast, whereon
to lean and weep,

O creep
But closer here : His heart is pitiful : His love
seeks out the one
Undone.

Our sin, Thy grace : our grief, Thy love : we are too
weak

Jesus, to speak :
Let these tears voice that we repent, that we entreat,
Low at Thy feet.

MONDAY NIGHT, May 4, 1868.

SORE AFRAID.

“THE angel came, and they
Were sore afraid.” — “ But why ? ”
Wondered the little maid ;
“ I’m sure I should not cry,
I should not be afraid ;
And will he come this year

Again? And do you think
They would be frightened here?"

"No dear; you would not fear" —
For, truth, one knows not how
Fear could touch those pure eyes,
That innocent clear brow.
But if, — abashed we muse, —
The angel should this year
Go up and down the town,
"Would they be frightened here?"

Would all that now looks fair
Perhaps seem fitting ground
If there the angel stepped
And glory shone around?
Would he find men at toils
Harmless as shepherds' are?
Would he find minds as apt
At crediting a Star?

If we should lift our eyes
And lo! the angel, — would
The deed or thought in hand
Be what we wish it could?
Full eighteen hundred years
So little change have made,
That if the angel came
We might be sore afraid!

THE SOWER'S CALLING.

I.

Do I pity the Sower?
He gives as he goes,
And stops not to take tithings
Of aught that he strews ;
If thence grow harvests sometimes
He'll pass not to see ;
If thence some reap royally,
'Tis others, not he.
Do I pity the Sower?
He knows the coarse sand
Cannot welcome nor nurture
The seed in his hand ;
Oft, he knows, the grains precious
Will on the rocks dry,
Or feed heedless birds, or blow
With wayward winds by.

II.

Do I pity the Sower,
His worn patient feet,
His sick weariness often,
His famine and heat,
Hopelessness for the wayside
And grief for the thorn,
While the ignorant idlers
Laugh him to scorn ?
I might pity the Sower,
Yet rather in mind

Whereof one might glory
I'm smiling to find.

III.

If one through the town should go
Trusted with bearing
King's errands and mysteries
Weighty, their sharing
His own guerdon peculiar
Would be, his alone ;
We might envy, we others,
And wish it our own.
O the joy of the Sower !
The strange joy of one
Who works not for wages,
Timed not by the sun,
Who, "in stripes beyond measure,"
Learns what means this word,
"Not by measure the Spirit
Gives to him his Lord ;"
Not reward just and equal,
Like human desire
To call in the laborer
And give him his hire,
Not e'en liberal balance,
Enough but no more
Of Divine grace and glory, —
No measure, no shore !
O the blessings that follow
The Sower, from cleft

Of the rocks he explores not,
From hungry soil left
With vital germs sinking
To work there unguessed!—
Ah, good Sower! no wonder
Your trade you love best.

EASTER MORNING.

I.

THE air with song of robins rings,
And now sweet Easter Morning brings
A lily in her hand,
While mournful Lenten days, gray-browed,
Their vigil stern disband.

II.

New life to laughter stirs at last,
The brooks and rivers locked so fast,
The stark and rigid land:
Once more sweet Easter Morning brings
A lily in her hand.

III.

The flowers, from out dark cave and cell
Where long like anchorites they dwell,
Troop as at one command,
To see sweet Easter Morning bring
A lily in her hand.

IV.

Wake, frozen heart, some praise to sing!
And hast thou naught to bring the King?
Wilt see, and empty stand,
The Resurrection Morning bring
A lily in her hand?

EASTER, 1879.

WHAT I DO, THOU KNOWEST NOT NOW,
BUT THOU SHALT KNOW HEREAFTER.

It is strange, oh! so strange in this world where I
stay,
Waiting and wondering, day after day;
And I cannot tell why my Lord has it so,
But sometime I shall know, for He said I should
know.

Perhaps all the roads are homelike and sweet
And I feel the grass easy under my feet;
When, sudden, the whole turns a landscape unknown,
Cold, wild, bewildering, horrible grown.

Sometimes I've dear company going my way,
And restful the nights then, joyful the day;
But in a moment I turn — it is gone! —
And through the long shadows I go on alone.

There is left me no word, there is deigned me no sign
Where they send me back word — these vanished of
mine —

And I cannot guess why my Lord has it so,
But sometime I shall know, for He said I should
know.

Strong helpers fail, tested; and hindering things
Clog heavy the soul that feels for its wings;
When I look for the rainbow after the rain,
Dark fold the storm-clouds returning again.

And my best hopes of future, my fair, fullest
sheaves
Perhaps mould and mildew, or turn yellow leaves;
Oh! I cannot think why my Father does so,
But sometime I shall know, since He said I should
know.

When I know I am sure I shall be satisfied,
Nor want a thing altered that was on this side;
So I'll not be prying; since God lets it be so,
I will just wait a little, and then I shall know.

SOMETHING TO DO FOR THE KING.

FOR him whom the king delighteth
To honor, what shall be done?
They bring the gorgeous apparel;
For the king's own steed they run.
The king's own crown with rejoicing,
They put upon him to wear,

And no less than princely heralds,
 (While all the multitudes stare,)
Proclaim through the market-places
 Before this favorite one,
“For him whom the king delighteth
 To honor, this shall be done!”

But he whom his liege delighteth
 To honor, loves so the king
I think with haste he would enter
 The throne-room: “Oh, not this thing,
But if so my lord hath purposed
 To pleasure me,” he would say,
“This is my humble petition
 And this the request I pray:
Let there be given thy servant
 The dower of special skill
And something to do for the King!
 The world can fulfill his will,

“Yet I crave from his royal grace
 A ministry all my own,
The secret of something he wants
 Entrusted to me alone,
Or a hint of service he needs
 Beside me that’s known to none,
For the one whom the King delighteth
 To honor, let this be done!
Show me how best I can please him,
 What I can render or bring;
This my entreaty before him,
 Something to do for the King.”

LILIES ON THE LORD'S TABLE.

DID lilies ever look so white, elsewhere,
As next the chalice, on the linen fair?

O whiteness! that doth so afflict my heart,
That but with pain I look on what thou art!

Ah, blessed pangs of pain! beyond pain's cost
He gains, who so attains that sight, soon lost.

Of spotless purity and peace, although,
Against the lilies — dark his life doth show.

So might be one born blind, who brought to sight,
Trembles to see for the first time, the light.

All symbols, how inadequate and dim!
They wash their robes and make them white through
Him,

Who, as a Lamb was slain; and these, in white
Shall walk with Him, shining as doth the light.

THE NEWS OF CHRISTMAS TOLD A CHILD.

HUSH, child! and hear how news the best
That ever was heard or told,
By angels sung, through the awed air rung
One night in a country old.

Through all that land did the children lie
Soft folded away to rest;

Tired mothers slept, and their babies crept
Close to each sheltering breast.

I think no one could have dreamed that night
Of an evil, painful thing,
And many a child must bright have smiled
And tried in his sleep to sing.

God's wonderful, watching, great gold stars
Waked while the world was asleep;
Shepherds of Bethlehem under them
Kept safe their tender sheep.

Think how the little brooks sang low,
And how all the night grew still;
Nor rustled there now one restless bough
On a dark Judean hill.

And then — 'twas then — the news was brought,
But not first to priest or king;
The shepherds only, sitting lonely,
Heard in this world angels sing.

Their song, — "Glad tidings of great joy
To the whole broad earth we bring!
Lo! in David's town is Christ come down
To be aye your Saviour-King.

"He lies a babe in his swaddling clothes,
A manger his lowly bed!" —
By no mortal tongue such tunes are sung;
All trembling the shepherds sped, —

And in his safe keep God held the sheep
They left there alone, I know, —
And found the Child, the Babe undefiled,
And found the news truly so.

Over the heights of the lofty years
And the deep, resounding sea,
The news has rung that the angels sung, —
Over thus to you and me.

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE.

O MERCHANTMAN, rich Merchantman,
Who hast so dear bought me,
How can I aught but wonder much
And wonder aye at Thee!
What was I worth? What could there be
That eye in me could see
To make me get a thought, a price,
And price of such degree?
What was there, Master, Thou had'st not
Within creation's range?
Thine was the choice through crowded worlds
Of all their best — how strange
Thou should'st have noticed me, to choose
Me for a thing of Thine!

O Merchantman, dear Merchantman,
Beats heart so free as mine?

Now I am glad and rid of care,
Bearing no more alone
Responsibility of self,
But used with skill, and shown
What I can do, how I may serve,
For I am not my own.
I bide me in a sweet content ;
It matters little what
Of gift, or grace, of faculty
In me is vested not ;
Since I am bought, I shall get used,
And that enough will be.
My Master, (still, not as I will,) -
Ah ! use me constantly.

Yet Merchantman, dear Merchantman,
Who hast in love bought me,
How can I aught but wonder much,
And wonder, aye, at Thee !

PALE GOLD.

I.

WHEN clouds brood dark and thick all day
Sometimes at nightfall they make way
Not for the purple, orange, rose,
That a red, royal sunset shows,
But for a slender, single bar
Of pale gold, shining faint and far,

It's one end wedged beneath clouds still,
One stayed up by some western hill;
O primrose color of pale gold
Like news not come, like joys half told.

II.

Sometimes on autumn slopes, grown thin
And bare of leaves, strikes briefly in
November sun, and with a rare
Pervading, hov'ring grace hangs there.
The wasted wraith of June's sunlight
This haze ethereal our sight
Might deem ; — and yet it strangely stays
With ling'ring love the tranquil gaze ;
O primrose color of pale gold,
Like news not come, like joys half told.

III.

And on the memory, perchance,
The thought of something kin may glance,
How in those patient souls, unused
To life's abundance, though infused
With richest dyes, — in those denied
The height of joy, the full of tide, —
A spirit breathes of such content.
In ev'ry tempered blessing lent,
To such appreciation bent,
Of gratitude and gladness blent,
Where e'er a glory glim'ring shines,
That, by its unobtrusive signs,

Men read how blessed are the poor,
Whose kingdom though not seen is sure,
Whose hopes, like the pale primrose gold,
Hint news not come, and joys not told.

EXPECTING.

THE child whose eager hands with flowers
Are running o'er
Always believes those further on
Fairer and more ;
Expecting better still to get,
More new, more strange, — only not yet.

We go expecting on, and miss
Time's count, beguiled
Through life's long miles by this same trick
As is the child ;
We think, whate'er good has been met,
Better to meet, — only not yet.

No cheat this instinct is, but true
It points. Expect
And still expect, O soul ! for heir
Thou art, elect
To that thy highest fancies set
Too low ; 'tis thine, — only not yet.

Where seeds and tears together dropped
Thou art to come,

And find such royal harvest-fields
 Thou wilt be dumb ;
 Where mystery's answer waits for thee,
 And where thy treasure is, thou'lt be.

Knowledge, its very name unknown,
 Beauty, skill, strength,
 Even perfection must be his
 Somewhere, at length,
 In whom prophetic, undenied
 Has cried, *I shall be satisfied.*

Glad faces bear they through the world
 Who, all the way
 Expecting thus, a secret have
 That sweet each day
 Sings over ev'ry present fret
 Of joys to come, — only not yet.

A CRY.

“ Behold I stand at the door and knock : if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”

SWEET Guest, dear Guest, no more
 I lock the low, dim door,
 Where long with patience sweet
 Have stayed Thy weary feet ;
 Withdrawing bolt and bar,
 I set it now ajar.

It is a poor, dark place,
 Unworthy of such grace ;

For through its pane, dust-deep,
Only the shadows creep,
And thick have spiders spun,
Nor left space for the sun.

And here no rich banquet
Befitting Thee is set ;
Not even bread is mine ;
I have no food, no wine,
No damask fine, no silver cup ;
How, then, with me canst sup ?

Oh ! that it were but clean !
For canst Thou really mean
To come and sup wherein
Only foul guests have been —
A dusty dwelling where
All empty is and bare ?

Sweet Guest, dear Guest, if Thou
In such canst go, come now !
O come ! hungry I wait
Longing, repentant, late,
Withdraw each bolt and bar,
And set my door ajar.

OWNERSHIP.

SOME little, hoarded thing you've kept
Treasured with care for years,
And look at still through tender smiles
Or crystal panes of tears.

No more, perhaps, than some half-worn
Ribbon or faded glove,
And yet it has a hidden worth,
Its ownership you love.

For it was hers — a friend so dear,
So noble, held by you
That even common things possessed
By her, grew noble too,
Pervaded so ; thus will perfume
Indeed no more permit
The secret hid of any that
Keep company with it.

God owns my life : this royalty
It doth put on to wear.
Or else its poverty and stint
Would be too hard to bear.
Therefore I live not worthlessly ;
Invested with that claim ;
Henceforth not wholly waste nor bad
But signed His lovely name.

Something of God's ! — no nobler rank
Has been for stars create ;
So grandly owned a simple child
Can stand beside them mate.
Something of God's ! His ownership
Cannot forgetful be ;
He will recall this keepsake life
Trusted awhile with me.

LIGHTING HER CANDLE.

“What woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle and sweep the house, and search diligently till she find it?” —
JESUS CHRIST.

LOVERS, and friends, and foes,
Woman, have painted thee,
Until the world is full
Of their conceptions, — free
To picture what thou art,
Or hast done, or shalt be.

Their canvas glows sometimes
As angels were stayed there ;
It darkens too, anon,
With foul shapes of despair,
Again, the faded looks
Strange caricature wear.

But my heart keeps, of all
Most simple yet most grand,
One : 'tis but an attitude
Drawn by a Master Hand,
And thus His better skill
Would have a woman stand.

She lights the candle kept
In her house ready ; meek,
With no outcry, patient,
And strong alone to seek
Her lost, she humbly toils ;
This is no creature weak.

Still that lit candle throws
Its steadfast light to-day ;
Ah ! Woman, see thyself
Shown by its clear, pale ray.
Light ! Seek the lost ! alas
If thy candle thou mislay.

CHRIST'S PEACE.

I.

The Bringing.

O EARTH ! O Earth ! how restlessly,
How long thy thoughts have striven
To guess about the unexplored,
The wondrous land of Heaven !
O Earth ! O Earth ! rejoice and shout,
Lo ! Heaven thinks on thee,
And opening sends to thee a word ;
Judge thence what Heaven must be !
Of all the loveliness of Heaven
That ear hath never heard,
They chose for angels to bring here
Peace, — that one heav'nly word.
How far unlike thy language, Earth !
And yet how canst thou miss,
Though foreign be the sweet new word,
To judge of Heaven from this ?

II.

The Bequeathing.

In simple, quiet words was left,
When Christ to glory blest
Returned from toil and victory,
This royal, rich bequest.
So much of Heaven lowly dwells
In creatures made of clay,
So much of immortality
Abides with men to-day !
Hast thou not had thy share, O soul ?
A share was meant for thee !
Ah ! only wake to claim that part,
Lest thou defrauded be.

ON THE WAY TO CHURCH.

A PUBLICAN is going
Up to thy house to-day :
He brings no other showing,
Has nothing else to say,
Than "God be merciful to me
A sinner, guilty before Thee !"

Others will be there raising
The Holy, Holy, high :
Others who give thanks, praising
With grateful, lifted eye ;
But in his hand he brings no gift.
But his shamed face he cannot lift,

And others grace and glory
Will beg, and gifts divine
To crown the Kingdom's story
Whose honor all is Thine :
This passion sole of prayer has he :
"O God, be merciful to me !"

Oh ! come he must, though feeling
With such to come no right :
Be what Thou wilt in dealing
With him — broken, contrite —
And treat after thy heart's own way
The sinner in thy house to-day.

A CHRISTMAS DREAM.

It was in the bleak December,
And the barrens of the year ;
In the night I heard her crying,
Little Alice, maid-child dear,
And she said, "I dreamed so ! wand'ring
In felled woods, I thought I heard
Trees prone, sobbing for their leaflets,
Bare nests, wailing for a bird,
Still 'twas empty, empty, empty ;
All was taken, nothing left,
And they wrung their hands, went sadly
Crying up and down, bereft,

I mean, the little spirits did,
Naked wood-sprites, shivering, cold,
And I sobbed, too, knowing somehow,
Knowing, though I was not told
That it was the blessed twilight
Of the holy Christmas Eve,
And it must the stricken bosom
Of the lonesome forest grieve,
When the Christ-Child, in the midnight,
As it was His wont to do,
Passed their way, and paused to gather
Holly, hemlock, pine — His due,
There would lack full tale to give him;
— So they wept, and wept, and wept !”

“Little Alice,” said I soothing —
“Come close to me” — close she crept :—
Said I, “Make it like a picture ;
We will play it’s Christmas Eve.
You and I slip out together” —
Lights and guests and games, we leave.
Now we gain the solemn forest,
Where the scattered trees stretch high,
All in rows, like pillared church-aisles,
Arched above with purple sky.
Here we mark the sobbing wood-sprites
And note, too, as we go by,
A woodman’s axe, and tree-trunks prostrate —
Felled for fire-wood, where they lie,
And my little, weeping Alice
Spies an empty nest, caught low

Where 'twas tossed by some oak's falling
In a tangled thicket-row.
Tenderly my Alice gathers
Of the club-moss at her feet —
Weaves it in a garland deftly,
With her fingers skilled and fleet,
Wraps it warm round the bird-homestead
Now deserted, lone and bare.

Hush! — I, holding little Alice,
Point along the aisles — and there
Soft, down an unrolling star-beam,
The Christ-Child! — look! how fair;
A face so white and innocent,
A glory in His hair!
A chain of winding, linked, wrought steps
His footprints in the leaves,
His hands, his breast run o'er; his robe
Is held up full of sheaves!

All with empty hands, before him
Behold the wood-sprites kneel;
And will the Christ-Child be so wroth
He'll crush them 'neath His heel?
Dear Alice, in the silver starlight
I see Him take one tear;
I see His hand outstretched to bl
The murmured words I hear,
"O ye contrite, tender spirits
So receive I, tribute rare!

Richer, costlier, for His Birthday,
Asks the Christ-Child not to share.
He comes not to *take*, O children !
But to *give* so Kingly free
That your emptiness, His glory
By its very depth, must be."
Then we see the lovely Christ-Child
With a smile of wondrous light
Lift, moreover, nest and garland,
And, on, through the darkening night,
Lit by torch-light of that diamond
The transfigured tear is grown,
Leave in passing, lavished widely,
Outward from His full hands strewn,
Feathery down of nestling snow-flakes,
Consolation, pure and blest.

Now, how satisfied, how peaceful,
The wood-spirits sink to rest,
Cradled soft on velvet mosses,
Spotless blankets tucked above,
And with lullabies, rocked sleepy,
Toned with care and taught by love,
For, as snow-flakes, busy, noiseless,
Fill up all, — stumps, nests, bare trees, —
Low runes croon they, O, so gently !
Little Alice thinks, like these : —

"Sleep, beloved, rest, beloved,
Thou art rich and comforted.

Deepest hollow, fullest provéd,
Barest edge, most choice bestead;
Never lonely nor forsaken,
Hold but up thy empty cup,
Poverty for tribute taken,
Heaven's best shall fill it up."

CHRISTMAS, 1874.

KEPT WAITING.

"It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait. — Rest in the Lord and wait. O tarry thou the Lord's leisure."

IN the heart was a longing,
A vivid desire,
That had so long lain hot there
It burned forth like fire,
And craved to be satisfied;
"Give, Lord, give!" it cried;
But for years it seemed silence
Alone that replied.

And at last the fulfillment,
Light-rustling drew near,
When the heart beat its quickest,
With hushed, listening ear,
The wing'd hope, as if frightened,
Spread pinions and fled!
"Thou must wait, Heart, yet longer,"
Stern Life coldly said.

"What shall I do while I wait?"
Confused asked the heart,

“ Shall I struggle for fitness ?
Shall toil be my part ? ”
Soft on its perplexed dismay,
Clear as a behest,
As caress tender, answered, —
The words — *Rest, heart, rest.*

“ I know, Lord, what waiting is,”
Still questioning, slow,
The heart sighed, “ Like an exile
I heavily go
To a barren isle, sentenced
I know not how long ;
O what may I do there ? ” — *Hope ;*
Came back like a song.

“ But, this is too beautiful,”
The heart whispered, “ Rest
Belongs to the conquerors
And hope to the blest,
And I am not yet victor ;
Can this be for me,
While I fall back defeated ? ”
Fear not, yes, for thee.

*Thou art waiting His leisure
Who spares time for all ;
Think not thy heart's dear desire
Shall forgotten fall
Of Him, even 'mid the whole
Loud world's complaints and prayers.*

*Nay ; the Lord's leisure tarry,
For His delay wears*

*Not the coldness of mandate
To exile afar,
But, howe'er thou'st kept waiting
Thy Host's wishes are.
Thou, meanwhile, entertained
His own guest should'st abide,
Well cared for, not impatient,
Till called to His side.*

JOY WILL FIND YOU WHERE YOU ARE.

YEARNING hearts, ye long, ye crave,
Having, maybe, all things, save
Some one soul's desire that could
Only make possessions good.
Verily, ye do no wrong
For immortals here must long ;
To wish, yea, to anticipate,
Is their birth mark in this state,
Yet though thirst and famine sore
Exercise thee, heed this lore :—

*Bide thee patient in thy place ;
Do its work, and take its grace ;
For, come joy from near or far,
It will find you where you are.*

Restless hearts, ye wander wide,
Questioning on every side,

Roaming wearily, with mind
Bent to find what none e'er find,
Joy's hid house, the secret throne
Where she lives alone, unknown.
Thou would'st thence fain wrest her best ;
Clumsy pilferer ! foolish guest !—
Be more child-like ; wait thy turn ;
With humility this learn :—

*Bide thee patient in thy place ;
Do its work and take its grace ;
For, come joy from near or far,
Joy will find you where you are.*

Humble hearts, to whom delay
Hath taught silence day by day,
Deem not overlooked, forgot,
Your renownless, modest lot.
David walked the sheep about ;
There th' anointing sought him out ;
Gideon threshéd ; there no less
Angels found him by the press.

*Bide thee patient in thy place ;
Do its work and take its grace ;
For, come joy from near or far,
Joy will find you where you are.*

TRUST.

THE glad river runneth
On errands for God ;

Trees make way rev'rently
Each side the road,
Just as on Sabbath days
Humble folk do
When up the churches' aisles
Preachers pass through.

God and His messengers
Need not make haste ;
Though with commissions
Manifold graced,
Yet glides she placidly,
Gracious and calm,
Nor loses breath to sing
One steady psalm.

Autumn's gay maple leaf,
Falling unmissed,
Rides with the river
Whither it list,
Carried so light a weight,
At the tide's mood,
Through gilded meadow-land,
Through the black wood.

Sweet that a life should lie
As the leaf lies
With an uplifted face
Towards changing skies,
Simply content to leave
Choice of its own,

And to the river's pulse
Floating alone.

So, thou grand will of God,
Float my life down,
Lying how small a thing
Homely and brown !
Breast to thy current beat
Let it still be,
O, thou wide will of God,
Borne upon thee !

THE QUIETING

"I have behaved and quieted myself." — *Psalms cxxxi. 2.*

I.

WE must be patient, Heart ! We know
That all which comes will go ;
All things are sometime overpast —
Yes, even pain, at last.
Then, Heart, when we are cheered once more,
And kinder than before
Seems heaven's sunlight shining clear
After the rain-storm drear,
Can we lift up undaunted eyes
To those deep, tender skies
If in the dark we doubted light,
Nor could believe that night
Would with the shadow flee away
At the return of day ?

We should be shamed before the grace
That found upon our face
The frowns of fretfulness, the tears
Of weak, mistrustful fears.
We must be patient, Heart ! nor thus
Let God's good gifts find us.

II.

We must be patient, Heart ! Some day
In the land far away
We may upon the burnished street
A noble angel meet,
And wonder at his gaze, as though
He saw, our guise below,
A something worthy honor, fit
That one should covet it.
Then, ere the reason can be sought,
Softly it may be brought :
"These gained the joys that such await
From tribulation great.
Though angels know not pain, their eyes
Regard in rev'rent wise
Those who have suffered, for they share
Something He had to bear
Who now to all his realms is light,
And robes his saints in white."
Should we not stand abashed, my Heart,
If grudgingly our part
Of Christ's thorn-crown we here had worn,
As though in spite or scorn

Of that the angels look upon
And count high honor won?
We must be patient, Heart! 'Tis sure
We count them happy which endure.

I SHALL ARISE.

I SHALL arise! I shall arise!
Lo! to all dumb things doth not this suffice?
With this content the Mayflower buried lies
And bides unmurmuring deep winter snows
Though late, though long, — as one who knows
And whispers when the storm-wind wildest blows,
I shall arise! I shall arise!

I shall arise! I shall arise!
All patient with his low estate the wise
Worm crawls on foot, or diligently plies
At his own shroud, there calm and willing dies,
To wake with wings, and symbol in their dyes
That flutter to the glorious, high skies,
I shall arise! I shall arise!

I shall arise! I shall arise!
Is it the soul, alone the soul, that tries
Its forfeit to evade? the soul that flies
From the sweet, reasonable mien, the debt
Of one who for the hope before him set
Endures despising shame? I fret: and yet
I shall arise! I shall arise!

I shall arise ! I shall arise !
For earth shall be the opened Paradise,
And for this mortal the immortal guise,
Such change as eye nor ear can guess ; — and so
Sing, soul, this Easter day ! Though poor and low,
I live now, Christ is risen, and I know
I, too, shall rise ! I shall arise !

KINDRED.

“ Perhaps there should not be the word ‘stranger’ in any language.” —
EMERSON.

ONCE when the procession went by,
With its flags to the breeze set high,
And its hundreds that two and two
Marched together as comrades do,
A sentinel’s wandering gaze,
That for once left the public ways,
Marked apart in a covert dim
One hidden, seen only by him.
Then his gentle soul, touched with ruth,
Moved him, pausing, to cry, “ Forsooth,
I pity you, friend, that alone
And unnoticed, because unknown,
You are left behind in the shade ;
No room in the ranks they have made,
And none thence have beckoned to claim
Acquaintance, or called you by name.
The procession went by, — but you,
I think, all the lonelier grew,

And maybe you wept at a fate
So unfriended and desolate."

"Ah! be not so sure," rang reply
Clear, fearless, as oriole's cry,
"In the North and the South I have friends,
Friends from the world's most distant ends;
I have friends in the East and West,
The friends I want most and love best!
When, then, the procession goes by
So much the more blessedly I
Sit smiling and dreaming of all
Comradeships that shall me befall,
Of company I shall be in,
And friendships choice that I shall win.
They shall come, the prophecy reads,
Whose expectance my glad heart so feeds, —
From North and South and East and West,
And shall sit down to take their rest
In the kingdom of the Father, —
Then can one not wait, and rather,
Who shall know the saintliest then,
Meet divinest women and men,
The flower of all ages and times,
The noblest of races and climes,
When the traveling-robes they wore
As disguise will hide no more
The lineaments half we fear
E'en learning and loving them here?

"Oh! fast to his home, my Father

These friends of my own doth gather,
So, let the procession go by ;
I am glad, and no wonder why ;
For any reminder can make
This sweet, secret melody wake
That is ready by night or day
To sing in my hearing away, —
There's a throng where I, too, belong,
Will sweep me on soon with a song,
And I shall have friends who have been
Little known ; shall be with my kin
Who have lived alien here ; though alone
All my life shall come to my own,
And recognize, then, there complete
Eternal relationships sweet."

YET SHALT THOU BE.

O SOUL, thou winged thing,
That strong-armed Life so often flings
On cruel edges of sharp griefs,
Thou dost let go thy best beliefs
On jagged edges of dark sin
Thou dost forget all thou hast been,
And all thy right singing to fly
High in the sunlight and the sky :
Not yet appears what thou shalt be,
For thy King yet hath faith in thee ;
Yet shall thou be — wait, wait and see !
As a dove's burnished, silver wings,

Who flieth homeward in the light,
Against the rainbow, pure and white.

Though thou in pain broken hast lain
With flesh so faint though spirit fain,
As angels that excel in strength,
Thou shalt mount up with wings at length !
At even-time, if not before,
Through thy cage door
Thou glad shall soar,
Kind death will ope that door ; no more
Languor, infirmity or lack
Shall hold thee down or call thee back,
But cumbered powers and hindered will
At last to perfect freedom thrill.
Yet shalt thou be this lovely thing,
And with the dove's fair burnished wing
Go flying homeward, shining white,
Against the rainbow's roseate light ;
How straight and swift thou'lt fly, O Dove !
Into His bosom, His, thy Love !

THE COPY.

A WOMAN paused by her window,
Before she went her way,
At morning to the waiting toil
And care of ev'ry day.
She lingered with a weary look
Why did her wistful eyes

Light suddenly, as if at sight
Of some strange, glad surprise?

She had but seen a little child,
A three-year-old, wee girl,
In her simple gown and apron,
With hair not half in curl,
But she caught such charm and comfort
As only women do,
From the dimpled cheek, white forehead,
And fresh eyes dancing blue,
That across the street showed gleaming
A dusky door-way through.

All day to the homely measure
Of plain accustomed care,
She softly sang, "*A little child*,"
Scarcely herself aware
Of rhyme or tune. It seemed to her
As though the words set there,
In that old-fashioned door she'd read,
Illumed like text or prayer.

"Or as if," she said, while lowly
And cheerfully she wrought,
The lesson growing lovelier
And clearer to her thought, —
"Or as if it were a copy
That my kind Lord had writ,
And I to-day the whole page down
Were set to copy it.

“Not to be over-careful then ;
Not to be over-wise ;
To guard my heart pure, unspotted,
Have fresh, out-looking eyes ;
To be hopeful, trustful, humble,
Believing, undefiled,
And aye to believe and quiet
Myself as a weaned child.

“And if it be indeed at last,
To me unworthy given,
To hear it said, ‘Come in ; of such
The kingdom is of heaven,’
Perhaps He’ll send to let me in,
A child across the floor,
A child to be the first I see,
There standing in the door.”

REQUITAL.

GRACIOUS and gen’rous souls forget
Values that lesser ones would set
On dividends their due.

The gift they bring, the good they do,
Then pass to work the same anew
Nor, common, wait return.

One thinks: “A certain man,” that day,
Not only paid, going on his way,
But, “Whatsoe’er,” he said,

“Thou spendest more, I will repay ;”
So, though uncalculating, they
Not grudging to fill out

That large, royal-entrusted More
Seem shaping all their giving o'er
His lib'ral mind who passed before
So near they learned his ways,

And for the love of Him they trust,
The bankrupt's noble Bondsman, must
Stint not, nor need to keep

A careful score with jealous pains ;
The “ When I come again ” remains
Their joy and recompense.

NOT MY WILL BUT THINE BE DONE.

Not mine ! not mine !
If that I did, I could but stand amazed at last,
My doing, my undoing, self-condemned, aghast.
For what my will wrought out would grow to, Lord,
is past
My knowing. I work in darkness ; Thou only hast
The secret orderly and beautiful whereby
If I obey Thine eye, not asking idly why,
My being shall coherently fair plans fulfill ;
I would not dare, I could not bear just my own will ;
Not my will, then, not mine !

But Thine ! but Thine !
For while this will of Thine blindly I'm doing, so,
I work, sure 'tis worth while ; what lovely shapes
 'twill show,
What rare designs, I smile to dream and guess, till
 lo !
The time arrives, the true light cometh, and I know.
Thy will, then, always — Thine !

SON, THOU ART EVER WITH ME.

To even our fretfulness
 God answers not disdain ;
Oft the soul that questions Him
 In jealousy and pain,
At the comfort of the word
 That he sends back again,
Looks up like a cradled child
 Soothed with a sweet refrain.

We ask why his beloved
 Seem so to suffer loss,
Why on the pure and upright
 Rests the heaviest cross ;
But ah ! these smile contented ;
 We, if our ears are fine,
May catch the pledge that keeps them,
 Too happy to repine —
Son, thou art ever with me
 And all that I have is thine.

We ask why earth's best plaudits
Are not for those who bear
The day-long toil, but rather
For those who choose and share
At whiles a showy portion ;
Is theirs that dearer sign,
Son, thou art ever with me
And all that I have is thine.

Wert thou joint heir of kingdoms
Would'st need to envy men
Of lesser rank and honor? —
Surely, sufficeth then,
O heir of love immortal
This heritage of thine,
Son, thou art ever with me,
And all that I have is thine.

ONLY FOOTSORE.

FOUR pilgrims at the night-fall
Sought the inn-door to plead ;
Then quoth the Host, "How fared ye
That shelter now ye need?"

"I met with thieves," the first said ;
"I lost my way," spake one ;
"Me tempests chased," another ;
And you, the last, my son ?

“Dear Host, no strange adventure
No danger wild I knew,
But oh! I am so footsore!”
“Come; I will refresh you.”

Blest master of the household
How good it is for us
That when we're only footsore
Thou op'nest to us thus!

A CHILD'S FACE AT THE WINDOW.

I COULD not comprehend
The preacher nor his text;
I walked with downcast head,
And brooded thoughts perplex.
In things too deep for me
My footing soon I lost,
'Twixt doubt and faithless cavil
Swaying wind-blown and tossed.

At last my eyes I lifted;
A face looked down at me,
A child's face at the window;—
Could there evangel be
More swift? ashamed I said,
And must I so forget
That lesson old, the child
Who in the midst was set?

As innocent and simple,
As fearless, if I'd be,
Quiet-behaved I'd fret not,
Nor start, at mystery.
The child's face at the window
Shall, like a masterpiece,
Be, henceforth, mine to copy ;
O Lord, my skill increase !

THE KEEPERS OF THE KING'S BIRTHDAY.

HE is the King of Kings ; and yet
Upon his birthday morn
No gorgeous, long procession-throng
Of kings and nobles moves along,
Chanting, The Christ is born !

No blazoned banners are spread wide,
No beacons leap and flare,
The guns are silent, and the throats
Of trumpets fling no triumph notes
Out on the startled air.

He is the King of Glory, Heir
Of Power and Kingdom, yea ;—
Yet wise nor mighty of the earth
With their pomp celebrate his birth ;
The children keep his day.

The children hold his birthday best
Of all the year of days ;

They keep it festival, they sing
The glad songs for his welcoming,
The carols for his praise.

Is it not worthy of a King
Once stainless Child who lay?
Let cleanest souls his honor show,
And children still before him go ;—
The children keep his day.

A LILY IN LENT.

THE Lily would not wait, but full and wide
Its Easter white displayed in Lenten-tide.
Mistaken, early Lily ! how canst thou
Thy garment choice of praise so show forth now,
While through a vale of penitence and prayer,
Fasting and sober-clad, the faithful fare ?

On Sunday in the church the grave, good priest
The children catechised, from large to least ;
“What is the day ?” “Sunday midway in Lent.”
“What then is Lent ?” “A Fast,” they said it
meant.

“This Sunday ; is it Fast or Feast ?” Perplext
They paused ; and so the priest clearly by text
Set forth how every Sunday of the year
Is Feast, a day of joy and holy cheer.

Ah ! then, chide not the fearless Lenten flower,
Timing its glad bloom by no Easter’s hour,

So fair a type of that therein thou hast,
Which, Lily of all days, and Feast in Fast,
No season can effect ; which by its own
Completeness, come whene'er it will, is known.

STAR OF BETHLEHEM.

WITH bated breath I wonder,
The solemn star-light under
Of late, still Christmas night,
What manner of strange, new sight
Was that wondrous pilgrimage
Of simple, earnest seer and sage,
By the leading of a star !
We, too, simple, earnest are,
We would be as honest men ;
Beckon, star, O beckon, then,
Shine for us as once for them,
Star, grave Star of Bethlehem !
Mindful they of naught beside
Than the stately, golden guide,
Ah ! no need, no need indeed
Had they, pressing on, to heed
The illuminated town
Or the home-lamps nestled down
Warm and near. Shine from above,
Our near-sightedness remove !
For we, longing too, would gaze
Higher than these earth-bound ways ;

We lift eager eyes on high
And with humble daring cry, —
Draw us as thou didst draw them,
Star, sweet Star of Bethlehem!

TIRED.

So tired, so tired!
O Father, hold me in Thine arms,
And fold Thy soothing, restful calm,
Around my quivering heart!
Tired, tired with throbs of anguish wild,
Oh! take Thy fainting, falling child
From the outer glare apart.

So tired, so tired!
Worn out with sobbing, Lord, I come,
Begging for mother — love and home,
Thine own dear heart beside.
I am not weeping any more,
And calm the tempests that before,
Swept curbless, wild and wide.

So tired, so tired!
Comfort and hush me into rest,
Against Thy loving, pitying breast;
I will not go away.
Wounded, and spent, and cold and sore,
Let me rest here forever more,
And never from Thee stray.

EJACULATION.

To Thee all angels cry aloud; the heavens and all
the powers therein.

To Thee Cherubim and Seraphim continually do
cry,

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth.

Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy
glory.

Even the cricket hath a shrill
And small but steady voice to trill
Thy lofty praise. The one dumb spot
In sky and earth be my soul not!
O Lord and King! let my soul be
A voice unwearied, praising Thee.

THEY WAIT THE EASTER TIDE.

(EASTER-DAY, 1884.)

I.

THE florist filled his shelves with roots,
With seedlings, bulbs, and tender shoots,
Then by love's magic, coaxing skill,
Controlled them deftly to his will
Till very royalty of bloom
Defied the winter's barren gloom
And grew, a rich and lavish mass,
All winter in their house of glass.

Carnation, pansy, jacquemino,
A single grace they used to know
In summer-time did not forget,
Nor mignonette, nor violet,
But rollicking in thickets grew,
Thrilling the senses through and through
With faint suggestions half of rest
And half of mysteries unguessed.

The florist's tact it was that still
Controlled them deftly to his will ;
He shifted them where shade or sun
Favored or forwarded each one,
Tempered the air from hour to hour,
And nourished them with dip or shower,
So that the winter's bride ne'er missed
As many roses as she list,
Nor belle her tribute from them all,
Nor sick one hers, nor hero's pall
Lilies that thousands haste to strow
With palms upon a prince laid low.

And yet the Murm'rer grew afraid,
Watching the florist at his trade,
He thought him odd for treating so
Some of the choicest plants that grow.
He thought him partial : — was it fair
To thrust these back in cellar air
Leaving them cold with little care ?
While common ones had every share

In petting, forcing, sun and dew.
He could not rest until he knew
When weeks went on and still there seemed
Favoritism, as he deemed.
“How can you thus vex and retard
The best so long? It does seem hard.”
“Hard? hard their triumph hour to hide?
They only wait the Easter-tide.
Hindered? Hindered for honor, yes!
They must not wake too soon for less.”

II.

It came transcendent Easter-tide ;
The Murmurer stood dim aisles beside
And saw in snowy splendors rise,
Like very flowers of Paradise,
The blooms that he had been so wise
To fear the florist might despise.
Long paused the Murmurer, and thought
Nor went his way again untaught.
He owned that often he had felt
Impatient at the way God dealt
With noblest men : They seemed the vext,
The crossed, the hindered and perplexed,
While better chance to lesser worth
Appeared to him the way on earth.
“Why? Why?” the Murmurer of old
Had even dared to question bold.

It does not err, the Murmurer's eye ;
Angels or men cannot deny

That joys to strongest souls come late,
That sweetest souls have most to wait,
That rarest ones with least regard
By life seem handled. This looks hard,
We cannot understand, and yet
'Tis weak to pity or regret;
For God has secrets with such men
And women that are past our ken.

E'en through the simple florist's speech
Some faint illumining may reach;
"Hard? hard their triumph-hour to bide?
They only wait the Easter-tide.
Hindered? Hindered for honor, yes;
They must not wake too soon for less."

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

STAY-AT-HOMES.

YES; stay-at-homes, this summer,
And as resigned, you see,
As lovers of the woods and sea
Would naturally be.
We've many claims, won't run in debt;
Of course, with our small means,
These hard times just make absolute
Life behind window-screens.

The Common's my resource — oh! well,
I won't "talk Boston," now;
But still you needn't laugh; is it
So easy to prove how,
In other cities' hearts, they keep
A great play-ground as rare?
We've taken charming summer trips,
Now haven't we, John, there?

For instance, when we sat and talked,
One evening, after tea; —

With doves' and sparrows' company,
He wrote verses for me.
I've laid them up, — to keep in mind,
As souvenirs past price,
The season when he stayed at home ;
Be sure you say they're nice !

Ah ! oriole hunts him
Some beautiful swing,
The lover of beauty !
Ere he will sing.
Robin's a rover,
So is the jay,
Swallow and bobolink
Wander all day.

But brown little sparrows,
Faithful and true,
Pleased with the sunshine,
Pleased with the dew,
Stay by contented,
And flutter and croon,
Musical citizens !
Nor tire of their tune.

Birds of the light wing
That roam far and wide
Are bright-hued and merry,
Sweet-voiced, beside.
But I, — close by, living
And working, — love best

The stay-at-home sparrows,
The sparrows brown-drest !

They chirp for the toilers
Who, coming that way,
Aye know where to find them,
So that every day
Need not lack song in it,
Something to grace
The monotone labor,
The one same old place.

Oh ! there is a sparrow
Lives in my heart,
Sings so continually,
Knows such sweet art
To build common straws
That the region affords,
And twigs *not* imported
Into nest beams and boards.

So, bonny tame sparrow,
Faithful and true,
Dear little stay-at-home,
I love you, I love you !
Yes, though they are gorgeous
And traveled, the rest,
Keep you proud company,
Love you the best.

SMILING TO HERSELF.

A LADY smiling to herself, only a mote, that fleet
Was lost to sight again amid the millions on the
street !

And yet, a stranger catching sight of that rapt, flick-
ering smile,
Pleased strangely by the happy thing, said to himself
the while, —

“Where should I go, could I but track the lady’s
swift smile home,
Through what thoughts dense and shady, or smooth
and fragrant, come,
And find at last what sunny spot, that, full of
warmth and light,
Is fit to be birthplace for such a glad and dainty
sprite ?

I would not with a rude, rough grasp, could I thus
play the boy
And chase the smile anonymous, its quietude annoy,
Nor would I brush one gold-dust grain from off my
butterfly ;
Yet I should like to follow ; and half I wonder why.”

The stranger phased with questions thus his journey,
not too free
Itself with entertainment ; nor had he thought to be

Replied to; but lo! above the heads of all a white,
Slight spectral thistle-down sailed slow, and caught
his sight.

Was it the lady's smile, whose ghost came back so
mute to chide

The stranger's prying queries and too presumptuous
pride?

Or merely mortal thistle-down that roamed its rest-
less quest

And sought the town, more worldly or more fearless
than the rest?

Enough, that though his lifted hand it would not
stoop to touch

Its message was not missing: "Stranger, be glad
that such

As thoughts, and thistle-down, and smiles, are
winged made, and so

Leave, eluding us unhandled, some things we do not
know."

LOVE IS NO COURTIER.

I.

LOVE is no courtier; Love is a prince,

He royally gives, and free;—

As the riderless waves that tramp to thy feet

Bear tribute unceasing to thee,

Carven white sea-shells, twisted sea-weed, —
Thus lavishly, tirelessly he : —
But if one were Lover, and you were the Loved,
What would you ask, may-be ?

II.

“Something to fondle, and something to keep,
Something to have and hold,
Something to last and something to love
When I am grey and old.
Earth has her gold-chests miserly locked ;
But though he found the key,
Since it is heavy, slippery, cold,
It should not be that for me.

III.

“Fields wear violets, tucked in their breasts,
Winsome and tender they :
But Love is of kinship stronger than this,
That cannot outlive the May,
Queens love their gems ; what’s that to a girl
With the passionate pulse of love ?
What, to a woman, old and black-gowned,
With Heaven so near to prove ?
No ; something to fondle, something to keep,
Something to have and hold,
Something to last and something to love
When I am grey and old.”

IV.

My Love asked no questions, needed no choice,
Only gave into my breast,

Memories golden forever to me :—
Memories tender and true as she :—
Memories deathless as jewels be ;—
So to my heart they're pressed ;
Something to fondle and something to keep ;
Something to have and hold,
Something to last and something to love
When I am grey and old.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., March, 1870.

EMBROIDERY.

I.

COLORLESS the air, and sombre lies without the
window-pane, —
Where the leafless vine weaves framework, twisted
deftly, vein by vein ;
Full of summer hue and beauty shows within the
Lady there,
Busy fingers, fluttering flosses, and rose ribbons in
her hair.

II.

If the snow-flakes be not petals, dropped from lilies
overblown,
Then without of all June's garden is not left one
flower alone ;
But within, beneath her fingers, flowers spring grow-
ing, glowing through
Pansies stained all gold and purple, broidered on
the silken blue.

III.

It is but a passing vision, where the curtains loop
apart,
Yet I, who pass outside, bear from it subtle fragrance
in my heart ;
Face the storm with step more fearless, go my way
with better will,
For the lady's soft, rich pansies, seen across her
window-sill.

IV.

For what friend, or lover, works she pansies, that
mean thoughts, they say ?
Well, I need not mind ; unaltered let the nameless
picture stay,
Just the bent head, and the flosses, and the curtain
caught away,
Showing on the twilight's background, looming
stormy, glooming gray.

V.

Still, I might be thankful, knowing strong men have
been saved ere now
By no greater thing than this is, — only the remem-
bering how
Some pure woman sits embroidering in the shielded
home's warm light,
Waiting, holding heart's-ease ready for his coming
back at night !

THIS SIDE.

To answer all or challenge, to come at any knock,
There is no porter standing to turn the key in lock,
That narrow door lies dumbly beneath its low, green
thatch ;
Mute, reverent, I linger, and finger o'er the latch.

This side, there's yellow sunshine, and a little wave
of grass ;
The shadows of young maple leaves that lightly
drift and pass ;
A butterfly, pale-golden, like a wee rush-light with
wings ;
A bird somewhere ecstatic that hidden swings and
sings.

A violet that nestles, cheek to the mellowed ground ;
The humming of a happy brook about its daily
round ;
The woody breath of pines ; the smell of loosening
sods ;
Such simple links of being ; such common things of
God's.

This side, the sob of longing, the drip of lonesome
tears ;
The broken cry "Thy will be done," sweet to the
angels' ears ;

The moan of riven hearts, of life's best life be-
reaven ;
The silence vast and voiceless ; — but the other side
is Heaven.

How often for the children we've planned a sweet
surprise !
So God awhile keeps Heaven, and locks it from our
eyes.
I think when opening inward, a door like this for me
Uncloses through the daisies and beckons quietly,

I shall be like the children for wonderment and
bliss ;
I shall thank God who kept me a secret sweet as
this.
So on this side I ponder and smile a little even,
To watch the rippling grass, and think — the other
side is Heaven.

A LITTLE CHILD IN HEAVEN.

“Gracious God, make room for another little child in Heaven.”

OH ! how do you think it is up there
When a child gets home to Heaven,
So little dust on his forehead fair,
So little to be forgiven ?

Would the small, white feet leave one muddy track
On that shining, golden floor

Though they stepped unwashed, from the journey
back,
Through the wondrous, opening door?

Are those who were mothers and left behind
Their little ones when they died,
Most glad to see him, most tender-kind?
Do they want him closest beside?

And those *child*-angels, who learned the ways
Of Heaven before he came,
Do they lead him their paths, teach him their lays,
And make him in all the same?

But He who is the Lord of the place,
Of Him none need to guess;
Have we not heard His ways of grace,
With the children He took to bless?

That welcoming look, that caressing hand
He will keep not back in His home,
And even "babes" there will understand
His "Little children, come!"

AT NIGHT.

Would you call it a thing for dreams
As she sits in the moon-lit door?
Only a girl's hat broad and brown,
Only a boy's hat torn in the crown,
Carelessly flung on the floor.

Only a girl's hat, broad and brown,
Moist from the warm, wee head ;
Stuck full of daisies half falling out,
A twisted ribbon winding about,
A string that's held by a thread.

Only a boy's hat torn in the crown,
With a ragged, rolling brim ;
Good for a basket, good for a ball,
Dipper, or boat, or mug, that's all,
It counts all the same to him.

Who can think as a mother can,
And fancy as mothers will ?
Over the clover the soft winds sweep,
But the restless children are lying asleep,
And the little brown house is still.

Docile as lambs that nestle in fold,
Her fingers together creep ;
Her eyes grow shady with tender tears,
And what she whispers the Lord who hears,
In His large love shall keep.

MANY FLOCKS, ONE FOLD.

FAST the twilight falls ; the lady
At her window lifts the blind ;
From its height sees herdsmen going,
Sheep and cattle homeward wind ;

Sees the mother call her children,
Let them in and shut the gate,
Sees the lamp begin the glimmer,
Sees the laborer last and late.

Then the little brook sings louder,
Then the stars shine in their place,
And she wonders, from her window
Leaning with a shining face, —

“From the golden heights of Heaven,
Where the dear, home-lights are burning,
Must it not be sweet to watch them,
Sit and watch the flocks returning?”

“Through the winding ways they traverse,
Over mount and over meadow,
Threading through the sunny uplands,
Wading through the gulfs of shadow.

“From north and south and east and west,
How they glisten as they gather,
And at last in fold together,
Find one kingdom of the Father.

“Ah! we go all day asunder;
By and by, at sunset gold,
Heaven will hold us all in safety —
Though so many flocks, one fold.”

THE REASON.

WALKING, with careful foot,
That city set for sleep,
I wondered why, so late,
Two roses, crimsoned deep
With fading summer's blush,
'Mid leaves else empty grew ;
I strayed a few steps on,
And then I knew.

Since, in the long, thin grass,
A low, small stone showed gray ;
It bore two baby names,
Twin lambs upon it lay,
Somebody's darlings there
Were cradled long ago,
And mother's tears wet their
Turf now untracked, I know.

Was it kind Nature's plan —
Sweet mother of us all —
That from June's vanished wealth
Had made this brief recall ?
Or had some angel thought,
And did the dear Lord care,
To see those petals open,
To have them scatter *there* ?

For to my thought half-spelt,
It read like this : A sign

Thus God will ne'er forget
Graves where sleep mine or thine,
Though our guard near be ended,
Though we be far away,
He thinks and sends His flowers there,
May be, like this, to-day.

So, very choice thy fragrance,
O "Rose above the mold,"
Over the two lambs lying
Safe in their peaceful fold.
Thine is ethereal message,
Breath of that Garden where
These mated babes together
A bloom immortal wear.

ECONOMY.

"O good my friend," said the preacher grave,
"Your garments are soiled and rent ;
They are too thin for our searching winds
And surely such as cannot be meant
To every stress of wear and tear
Thus daily to be lent.

"I see that walking about your house
Full often they catch and tear,
For your work-day's strain, its common cares,
They are little worth to wear ;

Then where is the garb you bear to church
That aye looks so strong and fair ? ”

I said, “ It is true I have fine robes
In lavender laid away,
But things that are fit for Sunday, sir,
Will never do ev’ry day.
I know, indeed, you are wise to preach
And to teach us how to pray.

“ You’ve only to sit and think, dear sir,
And con o’er the Holy Book,
But women, you see, must sweep and dust,
Tend the whole house, mend and cook,
So the good Lord pardon us herein,
With so many ways to look.

“ ’Tis true these garments are not so clean,
They are apt, I own, to fray ;
Still, economy must last through the week
And then on the Sabbath day
I can sit in church and hear you preach,
Brave in good attire and gay.”

But the preacher smiled a sober smile,
“ Good woman, then, if I may,
Let me see those garments that you keep
In lavender laid away.”
I thought when he saw my goodly robes
He could have no more to say.

But when he held them up to the light
Lo! many a stain of mold,
And the busy moth had feasted long
In every careful fold,
Nor had I dreamed that such folds could turn
So tarnished, and dull and old.

“House wife,” said the preacher, slow and kind,
“Does your economy pay?
God never meant faith, love, hope and peace
To be laid folded away;
He would have you wear them constantly,
Yes, wear them every day.”

TO WAKE AND REMEMBER.

WHEN the lithe, crouching shadows with fugitive
feet

Flee swift to their covert, to hide in their lair,
While the great, unlit earth in the chill of the dawn
Lies still in the twilight, and haggard and bare,
To wake and remember!

No bird with a song stirring yet in the leaves,
No foot in the house stepping light on the floor;
Then out of thy strange, foreign glammers, O Sleep!
With faint, failing spirit, with heart-sick'ning sore,
To wake and remember!

To wake and remember !

It may be the hands folded meekly last night,
And the shoulders grown used where the burden
 had lain,
But to each day new-born the old anguish awakes,
With the same scarlet terror, the same throbbing
 pain.

Yet read thou a parable here full of peace ;
Is thy waking so bitter? oh ! then doubly sweet
At the angels' good morning, all grief overpast,
To wake satisfied at the lovely Christ's feet,
 To wake and remember !

GLIMPSE.

FROM low horizon's twilight eaves
Where brooding shadow sits and weaves,
The meshes of the mist dropped down
And hid the lights of tower and town.

Far off the rustling, restless sea
Upon the beach trode heavily ;
The coming rain, all thick with musk,
Sent close, faint smells across the dusk.

One kindly door half-open swung,
And in the shimmer outward flung,
Red woodbine like some beacon glowed,
The damp path gleamed, and sweeter showed

A cradled babe, a pictured wall,
A shining floor, and fair and tall,
The mother where she called away
Her ling'ring children from their play.

A stranger, passing by unheard,
Went plodding on, and left no word ;
Like fluttering wing of wounded bird
The dead leaves at his footstep stirred.

The wind piped loud, the rain drummed low,
And last the city rose, aglow
With thousand lights across her gloom,
Like some dark shrub, of wondrous bloom.

For him no waiting hearth burned warm,
Yet with a smile he walked the storm ;
It was a picture never hung,
It was a song that was not sung.

But set to dreams of Heaven he kept
The babe that whitely lay and slept,
The climbing vine, the tidy floor,
The mother standing at the door.

LARGE ENOUGH FOR TWO.

I.

So small a house ! — a curve or two,
An angle in the sun ;

A yellow front, a low broad wing,
A porch may be, the simplest thing,
And windows close but one.

II.

But one with silver laces in,
Beaming, and clear and fair,
This one held out to be filled up
With the spilt sunbeams, like some cup,
Crystal, and spun of air.

III.

So quaint a house ! — it looked beside
The drapery of land ;
The orchards ripe, the meadows wide,
The grain-fields, with their rendered tide,
And all that mellow country side
That folded every hand.

IV.

Only a yellow feather, dropped
Between the bronze and blue ;
And yet a subtle thought we caught,
From roof and door, so plainly wrought,
But large enough for two.

V.

There's room for wings to fold or flit —
Ah me ! — as wings will do ;
For griefs and goods, and cheers and cares,
For joy and pain — for songs and prayers,

In any house like this of theirs,
That's large enough for two.

VI.

There's room for angels, as they come,
To pass upon the stair —
There's room for many hopes and tears,
For garnered sheaves and blasted ears,
And the great loom that spins our years —
Oh! yes — that loom stands there!

VII.

With iron shoes, we hurried on,
And passed; you never knew;
The world is large and rafted high,
But God keeps places — glad am I,
Amidst vast space, both side His sky,
Warm, safe and small, *for two!*

THE PROTEST.

“It doth not yet appear what we shall be.”

I FELT dear Love about me close
Her strong and clinging arms; there rose
Before I could to her control
Resign in conscience all my soul
The protest of an honest mind,
“Love thinks,” I said, “in me to find
Rare qualities her own sweet thought

Has from imagination wrought.
She loves me as the thing her love
Deserves to have, nor waits to prove
The thing I am, and gauge by it;
Love me not so; I am not fit!"

O Love, dear Love! she loved me still,
Naught I could say would change her will
To love me, love me, love me so
I was abashed; I did not know
How I could undeserving bear
That disproportioned love unfair.
I told her o'er and o'er how I
Before her with humility
Disowned the gift of grace she would
Ascribe to me; I was not good.
She only smiled; what could I do?
And would she love me if she knew?
O Love, what could I say to you,
Giving me so much more than due?
Through autumn woods I went my way
To seek the church one smiling day,
And in the outer courts I stopped
To see bright leaves the maple dropped
Outside the door, the while inside
High, tinted windows scattered wide
On aisle and chancel, from the same
Rich god of light, his gold and flame.
"Thus Love," I sighed, "with her own hues
Transfigures me, then raptured views
What she calls me — poor Love, blind Love;
When all is hers she doth approve."

Did angels soundless cross the floor
To find me by the shady door?
"It doth not yet appear to me,"
The still air said, "what we shall be ;"
And then my heart leaped up to read
How right Love is, how ne'er is need
That we should criticize and fret
When Love interprets ; we forget
She is the teacher, we but learn ;
She's never wrong ; she can discern.
Love, you are right ! Yes, Love, love me ;
You love the thing that is to be.

When I should run I often halt,
When I should soar fall into fault ;
But now our eyes can meet, for, dear,
I know it doth not yet appear
What I shall be ; I think amends
I can make then to all my friends.
I'll take your love now, without fear,
In pawn until it doth appear
What I shall be. So, dear, love me ;
Love me as some day I shall be ;
And all this poured-out love some day
Perfected, strong, I will repay.

THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE.

I.

"I would paint her," said the woman,
"With the light upon her wings,

Caught where palest tinge of morning
One faint, eastern glimmer flings,
Yet there should be heavy shadows
Left about her lamp-like face ;
She should seem to watch for daylight
Waiting, leaning from her place.

“Some rare pathos I would fashion
In the meekly-drooping head
As of long and weary vigil,
Chilling dews and midnights fled.
Steadfast still with eyes of yearning
I would have her constant stand ;
Listening, harkening, poised expectant,
White, shut lilies in her hand.”

II.

“I would paint her,” said the artist,
“Just a woman, slight like you ;
Burnished hair, but lightly tethered,
Eyes more full of shade than hue,
Lips half-smiling, brow of quiet,
And some soft and simple gown
Fit to handle and unrustling,
Made like yours, I think, of brown.

“There should be a rough road winding
Towards a sunset burning low,
One far gate, a dream of frost-work
Whitely set against the glow ;
And the little, hindering children
Should those hasting feet beset,

Clinging, wearied, to her garments,
Lifting wistful eyes tear-wet.

“With her hands held out for helping,
And her smile so strangely sweet,
Not a glint of crown, nor shimmer
Of white robes upon the street,
Needs them not to teach the children
Reverently to say some day —
‘Surely God’s own angel Patience
Lifted us along that way!’”

A BUST OF DIANA.

DIANA, in a woman’s room,
High-niched, looks down the perfumed gloom
As held there by some strange, white charm,
Serenely chaste, serenely calm.
Daughter of Jove, what seems to you
Her chamber hung in white and blue,
Her ribbons, trinkets, laces, rings,
Her pretty, trivial, tasteful things?
And what would judge thy steadfast gaze
Of her life here, its summer days?
Perchance the hymn or alphabet
She’ll teach; some ache, or fear, or fret
Brought here, she’ll gently soothe away;
But for the rest, the world would say,
She sews, she sleeps, she sings: she lends
An ear to gossips and to friends;

Tends children, cares for flowers, books, e'en
For small, dumb pets ; — what thinks't, O queen ? —
Thou who didst never bend before
The yoke of Love, mark, furthermore,
This woman can be swayed to smile
By one sweet word ; she'll weep, erewhile,
As easily for blame ; I own
'Tis love she most craves, love, alone ;
(That very tricky love that you
Disdained) ; — so simple women do !
I know not, Huntress, be it scorn
Or clemence that thy brow adorn ;
But whate'er be thy just esteem
Superb thy carriage, I deem,
And steadfast toward this woman mate ;
A woman's life, a woman's fate
Thou payest its divinest claim,
Calm, reverent *silence*, — in God's name Diana !

FOLDING AND LAYING AWAY.

FOLDING and laying away,
Now is the time of the year,
For empty the gardens and orchards,
Frost and the north winds are here.
So the careful and prudent housewife
Gathers the summer array,
Skillfully fingering, busily
Folding and laying away.

The little best clothes of the children,
With edges, embroideries, lace,
All prim, clean and stiff in their creases
Pile up one orderly place ;
Here lie a girl's prettiest muslins
Of lavender, blue, and rose ;
There's the dress that my lady likes best ;
Ah ! the secret who knows, who knows ?

This sea-green she had for the sea-side ;
The pink she had for the ball ;
But the white, ruched, ruffled, and pleated,
So foamy and fine of fall,
Is haunted by June scents of blossoms,
More subtly than all the rest ;
Well, heaping like drifted-in leaves,
How fast fills the great cedar chest !

Some fragment of psalm softly over
I hear the good housewife croon ;
But they're not the words in the hymn-book
She sets to that old, sweet tune.
She's saying, " O Friend in Heaven,
How I'm thinking of you to-day,
As alone in the dusty attic
I'm folding and laying away !

" How little I know, my beloved,
How ill I can say what I mean !
But I fall wondering, wondering,
These homeliest cares between ;

When the mortal put on immortal
And the angels brought you there
For your heavenly dress the same pure white
That they of God's household wear,

"You slipped off the loves and the cares
That, as it seemed before,
In an every-day close communion
Like a common garb we bore.
And are they now waste and forgotten,
Never of use again,
These traveling robes of a pilgrim
Who has reached her home since then?"

May it be that, like last year's raiment
Over them angels say,
As we do, — "Another year," — gently,
Fold them and lay them away?
Bodies, like frayed summer garments
We know when put by God keeps;
And when His word all-revealing
Sounds o'er earth's heights and deeps,

"'Fold *them* up as a vesture!'
May-be poor souls will find
That the infinite Lord has saved their all
And left nothing out of mind.
In the universe no little thought there is
Or trust, too small and fine
For Him to bring forth, *not lost*, that day —
Even of yours and mine!"

KNITTING WORK.

THE great lamp in the west burns low;
Once more a finished day
It's widths, loose-meshed of yellow light,
Binds off to selvage gray.
All's quiet in one little room,
Close by whose windows grow
Chrysanthemums in late, white bloom,
That catch the last sun-glow.

All's quiet, save the ticking clock,
The cat, but half-awake,
And now and then small silver sounds
That clicking needles make.
Over and under, through and out,
Row after row is done;
Over and under, through and out,
Another row's begun.

"The days grow short again, and cold,
Colder than used to be,
And now it must be time for snow,
The clouds look so to me.
Thanksgiving comes to-morrow;
These stockings must be done —
Ready for Benjamin's little Tom,
My youngest's youngest son.

"He's big as John was when he died;
Poor Johnnie! he'd have been

An old man now — ah, well ! I know
To murmur is a sin,
And then his father loved him best,
And none of the others died,
Three of them left — and should I grudge
That one is at his side ? ”

Over and under, through ; — “ I know
That Reuben’s wife is good ;
She makes plum puddings, well, perhaps
Much better than I could.
Joe says, ‘ Puddings that taste like mine
He never thinks to see ; ’
If Jane will use nutmeg for spice
I own its spoilt for me.

“ In the old times, their father now,
How he’d indulge my whim !
Here’s a stitch dropped — how dark it is !
My eyes are dull and dim.
I’m getting old ; I’ll go to him
Some day, not far away.”
Her Past, her ball of sombre yarn —
The old wife knits her gray.

But young eyes do not heed, though now
The daylight dies out quite ;
The girl is quite content to knit
By hearth-fire’s flickering light,
Ivory needle, hand as white,
Ply swiftly-rippling threads

From flossy, mossy zephyr skeins
Of shaded, gorgeous reds.

Ah! on her finger, firefly-like,
Something keeps glittering;
And then she smiles, a smile to match
The shining, changeful thing.
“Yes, surely he will come to-night;
And will he like the new
Soft cashmere dress I mean to wear?
At least his favorite ’s blue,

“So those shall be the ribbons tied
About my throat and hair;
I don’t quite think, though, he shall see
How very much I care!
Ah! if I told him that I shrink,
This first Thanksgiving Day,
From meeting all his kinsfolk grand,
My Love, what would he say?

“And yet I can be brave for him;
They shall not need to call
His choice aught more than maiden-shy,
And none among them all
But for his sake” — her blushes come
And go, in ebb and tide —
“Some day, some day I’ll learn to love,
As *they* shall love his bride.”

What dreams she dreams, what castles builds,
How counts her hopes unsaid,

While in the twilight's leisure calm
The maiden knits her red !
Grave threads or gay, God take the work,
Accept, approve each one,
When it has grown too dark to see,
And knitting-work is done !

TIRED LITTLE SHOES.

FOR FOUR VERY LITTLE BOYS AND ONE LITTLE
GIRL.

[The first boy holds in his hand a pair of little shoes ; passing them, at the close of his stanza, to the next, and so on till the little girl takes them, putting them away in a corner, carefully and tenderly.]

FIRST BOY.

THESE little shoes are very tired,
Unless I've guessed far wrong ;
They've been so busy, worked so hard,
And traveled all day long,
Tired little shoes !

SECOND BOY.

Trot, trot, trot, pattering round the house,
Through walk and garden plot,
In the chip-yard, by the barn,
To the neighbors', trot, trot, trot,
Tired little shoes !

THIRD BOY.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, up the road and down ;
For daisies in the lane,

After pebbles in the brook,
Meeting papa at the train,
Tired little shoes !

FOURTH BOY.

Run, run, run, hunting butterflies,
Rolling the hoop for fun,
Playing wagon, "horse" and "catch,"
Chasing Rover, run, run, run,
Tired little shoes !

LITTLE GIRL.

Now, is it strange, that after this
The shoes should want at night
To keep quite still and rest themselves ?
And is it more than right,
Tired little shoes ?

And yet, the very boy who wore
And used them all day, said
He didn't want to have them off
And go himself to bed ! —
Poor little shoes !

CALLING THE ROLL.

THE school-room humming, humming,
Like the wheel all day at the mill,
Grew orderly then and quiet
And its nestling children still ;

Through the western windows slanting
On the floor of dusty pine,
Dropped sheaf-like sprays of mellow,
Yellow, ripe sunshine.

Flowers on the desk were fading,
The books were all replaced,
The map on the board was blurring,
The sums were half erased,
Hands folded, day's work ended,
They sat in long, prim rows
And heard the old clock's ticking
Louder and louder prose.

The boys had chalky jackets;
You may remember how
The girls wore *their* white aprons
And calicoes, e'en now !
Half shy and half coquettish
Through loose locks falling down
The blue eyes stole thwart glances
Towards bolder black and brown.

And the teacher called the roll,
The school-day's last concern ;
Exchanging challenge, answer,
Through well-known names in turn.
“ *Present !* ” — blithe eyes uplifted ;
“ *Absent* ” — here no reply ;
“ *Tardy !* ” — voiced lower, shame-faced !
So passed the roll-call by.

Ah ! now Time's steady ticking
Has brought to afternoon
The school-room's restless children —
Life's afternoon, thus soon !
And now in gathering twilight,
And now with chastened soul,
Waiting, looking, listening,
How memory calls the roll !

And who in the great world's task-room
Cries "*Present*" from his place,
Lifting through toil and trouble
Still brave and steadfast face ?
Ah ! who is written "*Absent* ?"
About his name the still
Strange hush of death may linger
Of failure, or worse ill.

And who the laggard "*Tardy*"
Against himself records —
Pale memory knows ; she hears response
Plainer than answered words —
Needs to be glad or sorry,
All tenderness the soul
That hearkens down the distance
When memory calls the roll !

Life's afternoon slow waning,
Veers towards its sunset goal ;
Think not to pass unchallenged,
GOD calls at last the roll !

No voice shall there be missing,
No name shall slip forgot ;
Great Master, strictly marking,
Severely judge us not.

SILENCE.

I.

We are but little islands in the Silence
That sucks and settles round us like the sea ;
But drop plaint, song or deed ;—then, see how
 swift
The silences again above it drift,
And cover, smooth as ever, Has Been, and Shall
 Be.

II.

Or, list that strange sea lapping in the dark !
Then loud the subtle currents pulse, and near ;
When in the night enclosed as a shut box,
Sleepless we lie and long to pick the locks,
By some new, nameless sense the soul can hear.

III.

And, at the last, Silence submerges all ;
The loftiest head, the proudest work, swept o'er
By its high tide, sink down and disappear ;
Yet drifting, foreign wood and weeds do cheer
Our souls with certain signs of some rich shore.

IV.

Then why should we so question Silence, — fear
Its dumb ways, and dread its deeps to dare?
Have we, Columbus-like, no yearnings grand
To be borne on and find that untried Land?
Silence, we trust thee; only bear us there!

TO A NEW FRIEND.

I STAND before this word costly and good,
The small word "Friend," as might have stood
The ardent suitor for fair Portia's hand
Before the casket fated to command
Him direful failure or full-crowned success;
My look, my touch be reverent no less.

For I am 'ware it is too choice a thing
For any light or careless fingering;
E'en though it should be aye denied to me
To fit the lock with the right, subtle key,
Its very outline of a grace severe,
And workmanship so exquisite appear
That I am glad even to come so near.

Nor can one force it open; more like that
Night-blooming flower, unfolding noiseless at
The hour instinct points out on her dumb clock,
This casket of itself expands.

The lock
Has spells, and to rude haste or selfish greed
Would solely yield the fool's own face, indeed.

O friend, new friend, where (of thy grace) I've set
This gift most softly down, I will not let
Aught carelessly intrude ; oft, day and night,
I shall frequent its shrine, to leave a light
Caress, — a kiss, — or flower, — untarnished so
Keeping it always ; glad in that I know
Thou trustest me so far ; not over-bold,
Yet, if I may hope, hoping to behold
At last the one "fair counterfeit," the pelf
Most precious enclosed, —

Lady, thyself !

WAITING FOR THE DECISION.*

(NOVEMBER 9th, 1876.)

THE drums were ready to beat
For a victory hard bought,
They were ready to regret
Whose loss was the battle fought,
When a strange, dramatic pause
Upon the nation fell ;
The drum-beat arrested hung,
The murmuring hushed as well,

* Referring to the Presidential election.

And, holding their breath, men all
In a common, tense suspense,
Bent ear to the telegraph wire
To count the land's pulses thence.
'Tis the moment of tableau
When the group are motionless ;
And a world looks on with awe
To read what it may express.

'Tis the second when the sun
Prints the photograph ; — as though
Spell-bound in their places, men
Grave, silent and stirless grow.
Ah ! clear will the photograph
Stand out at last, and out-wear
In history long the lives
Of those who figure there !

The drum is ready to beat,
But the lifted hand is stayed ;
The dance is ready to tread,
Yet tarry the feet of the maid !
'Tis the moment of tableau,
'Tis the photographic pause ;
Will the verdict be of woe ?
Shall the verdict be applause ?

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

WHEN with sore certainty I knew,
Beloved, that your way led through

Strange places of the earth, and dark, —
Too lone for speech, too deep for spark
Of torch to bear you company,
By wilds that took you far from me, —
Holding my very breath for you,
As they for life who listen do,
I seemed to lean and hearken — yet
Not desolately hopeless let
 To listen there.

I thought and thought
How the bold diver oft has brought
Things precious from the vast, dread deep
That holds such mysteries in keep;
I thought what wondrous glimpses he
Has had of rare things under sea.

By this more perilous descent
I know might for my love be meant
Gains choicer, rarer far, than this,
And she is never one to miss
All subtlest, noblest meanings; so
In my stilled heart the strong hopes grow,
That with full hands, with thankful eyes,
At last restored, my love shall rise
 Out of the depths.

LULLABY.

LIGHTLY rocks my bonny boat,
 A little idle thing,

A bird of folded wing,
With happy, careless swing,
Where summer sunsets fling
Their wealth of warmth and gold,
Their purple breadths unrolled !
Light rocks my bonny boat,
Empty, light and free,
Under caressing sun,
Upon the sleeping sea.
Sleep in my arms of love, oh sleep, sweet baby mine
Thy mother's breast thy sea, her smile thy warm
sunshine !

Glad rocks my bonny boat !
Across the wide blue bay
All through the glowing day
Come glittering as they may
The sparkle-ships so gay ;
A sunbeam each for crew,
Their freight, spice-breezes new ;
Glad rocks my bonny boat,
And listening, half-asleep,
Cares nothing for their wayward news,
Cares nothing for the deep.
Hush, hush, my little one, I hold thee close to me ;
Thy dreamy, deep-blue eyes are drooping wearily.

Calm rocks my bonny boat,
By the light waves caressed
In its safe and sunny nest

Within the harbor's breast —
But ah ! I tremble lest
At some stern future call
Danger, storm, wreck befall !
Still calm my bonny boat
Rocks itself, half-asleep ;
O'er sun and storm One broods
The same ; o'er port and deep.
So rest, my darling, rest, in calm, untroubled sleep ;
For life, for death, forever, thy soul is His to keep !

THE NIGHT ROUND.

I.

THE snow came down in the night ;
A beautiful work was done
Quickly and well ; yet none
A careful oversight kept,
For all the world, tired out, slept,
While the snow came down in the night.

Then the earth, so soiled yestreen,
Was made more shining and clean
Than mortals could fancy white
Save for the unearthly sight.
And nothing so poor and bare
But put on the royal wear,
Nor humblest roof in the town
Uninvested with richest down,
When the snow came down in the night.

II.

The nurse, on her midnight round,
Soft-slippered and without sound
About the hospital crept, —
While the patients restlessly slept, —
Smoothing the counterpanes, — tost
By dreamers but half-way lost
To the old pain's aching sense.
She passed by a window ; — thence
Showed dim mounds half-forgot, —
A burial-place, where not
One straying foot would care
To seek an entrance there.

But the snow came down in the night ;
Like the night-watch on her round
It walked the burying-ground ;
With tender touch and light
Laid each counterpane smooth and white,
And crossed no mound, unless
With a reverent caress.

So the night-watch went her way
By her lantern's flickering ray,
Smiling to think, though her eyes
Met ev'rywhere some pain's guise,
How faithfully all who slept
Unconscious, were watched and kept.
Her part was a restless charge,
How troubled, — alas, how large ! —

But for all would come transfer,
Transfer both to them and her,
And there in the Silent Ward,
Like an angel from the Lord,
How the snow came down in the night !

THE COMMUNION OF SAINT SUFFERING.

(SUMMER OF 1881.)

THEY listened round the world each day ;
What the next bulletin would say ;
They calculated, in suspense,
'Twixt trembling hope, and fear intense ; —
Pliant to ev'ry change were men
As sympathetic women then.

What was this touched the whole world so ?
What deemed they worth such joy or woe ?
The course of battles ? — Nay, not now,
Though War had laurelled once his brow ;
The veerings of the helm of State ? —
Not now : palsied its issues great.
'Tis but a sick-room nations take
To fix their eyes upon ; they wake,
Watch, weep, and pity, for the sake
Of one sick man's peril and ache.

Not that good soldier he had fought,
Not that wise statesmen he had thought,

Thus the wide kingdoms touched and moved
To make him prayed for, yearned for, loved !
Mankind the Sufferer loves ; and kin
All human hearts are made therein ;
The Sufferer by his pain alone
Becomes of sufferers claimed their own,
And so the King wins to His throne.

Army of Martyrs, therefore, who
On countless sick-beds suffer too,
Unknown to fame, noticed by few,
Communion, fellowship, with you
This hero had whom all men praise.
Like you endured he tortured days
And fevered nights without complaint,
Bearing the Soldier through the Saint.

And you, whose sickness you have thought
Must make you useless, your life naught ;
Oh ! read, illuminated here,
How otherwise to God appear
You and your life. Of ev'ry fight
This soldier made, shines one so bright
As this upon the sick-bed ? Where
Showed he so real and brave as there ?
Deserves it not the palms and bays
The people bring who stand to gaze ?
Your life may lack the gaze ; yet do
The palms and bays belong to you ;
And angels, when they come some night
To ope for you that new Daylight

They did for him, will be as right -
To hymn o'er you, "Fought a good fight!"

FRIEND, OR ENEMY?

"Advance, Friend, and give the countersign!"

STRANGE Death, so swift, resistless, still!
Through centuries unknown
Men have watched helplessly his will
Wrought out from hut to throne.

No sound, no step, but lo! all done;
Glad eyes dulled to the light,
For love and life left us alone
Meek marble cold and white.

Yet when on yours Death lays his hand
It seems as bitter new
As though in every age and land
He had hurt none but you.

"O robber! enemy!" dares Love
At first shriek out in vain;—
(Poor Love, stung blind!—I think above
They're patient with his pain;

His pain, his passion and his heat,
Rebellious, ignorant;)—
But wait! the months and seasons fleet
To fix in adamant.

And Love sees toil, or shame, or grief,
Set seal on closest friends,
Sees his beloved past his relief,
His best shape worthless ends.

Then comes, somewhere his life along,
To cry with chastened heart,
O Death, how sweet, how safe, how strong,
How beautiful thou art !

My holy dead I well may leave
Securely in thy trust,
Though flesh may quail, though heart may faint,
Before thine awful *Must*.

For they are safer far with thee,
O Death, serene and vast,
Than either with mad life or me,
I own it at the last.

Ay, safer ; I must not complain ;
Though thou deep mystery be
We know nor pain again, nor stain,
Can touch them gone with thee.

And life, spite its feigned frankness, bears
The mystery, not that clew,
While, though *I* spilt my blood for theirs,
I'm but life's plaything, too.

O Death, how sweet, how safe, how strong,
How beautiful thou art !

I guess thee angel now ; ere long,
When I in turn depart,

I shall know all ; and by each one
Who went to Heaven before,
What they have seen so long, and done,
Sit down and talk it o'er.

JUST THE WAY A WOMAN WILL TALK.

So it seems that it's settled for this year ;
Town voted " No License " they say ;
I own I feel prouder to live in 't
This noon, than I did yesterday.
Well, I said so, at breakfast this morning,
And Eben threw right down his fork,
And says he, pretty crusty and quick-like,
" Just the way that a woman will talk ! "

Then he and the boys j'ined together,
How taxes were up high enough,
And now I'd see piled on a thousand
Or two, to pay for this stuff.
The traffic would go on, — not a doubt on 't, —
The rum-sellers banded, of course,
Only now what they'd had to pay for 't
Would be lost from the scant public purse.

" The way that a woman will talk ! " says they,
Between the hot coffee and cakes,

“Not the least sense in practical business,
 Swallowed up by a notion she takes!”
 Neighbor, I’m an old-fashioned woman;
 Thinks I, let ’em talk if they will;
 I passed down the cream and the doughnuts,
 And jest held my tongue and kep’ still.

Yes, only an old-fashioned woman;
 That’s all I pretend to be;
 Ain’t learn’d; dread the idee of votin’;
 Swore “Obey” when Priest Young married me;
 But, for all, how a woman will talk
 I ain’t afraid nor ashamed to show;
 I declare, I feel kin to the wisest,
 And queen with the queen thinking so!

That saving and losing of money
 Isn’t a question to last;
 That voting for *principle* purely
 Is a vote for eternity cast;
 That it’s grand for a town to be standing
 In attitude honest, well-known,
 Saying loud, “Since this practice is deadly,
 We’ll *act* so, not talk so alone.”

God prosper all earnest endeavor
 To make Law and Authority save
 The child from a drunken father,
 The drunkard from worse than the grave.
 God bless always humanity’s strugglings
 To fly upward, or creep, or walk!

Yes, I say I am glad, I am proud —
That's the way a woman will talk !

GOOD-NIGHT.

To A. B. A.

GOOD-NIGHT ! —

That we are parting scarce we take note,
And yet all noiseless and swift we float
Each way far different and remote.
Sleep, like a ferry-man in his boat
Bears you away and comes to take me,
Nor do we meet once as on sail we
The whole night long o'er that strange dim sea
Where's haze, mist, mirage, but never sunlight ;
Past many a vision and weird sight !
Ere we embark I wave you good-night ; —
Good-night !

Good-night ! —

We travel light on our little cruise,
Without gold for fees, or stores to use,
Or baggage for ballast ; strait and small
Sleep's cushioned craft, and will hold of all
A man's possessions and friendships none ;
Each must go singly, as he begun.
So nightly we, child-like, one by one
Trust an unseen skill to steer us right. —
The ferry-man give you sweet, smooth flight
Across to Dawn's welcome cliffs of white !
Good-night !

EARLY CANDLE-LIGHT.

LEAVE the curtain wide ; one star
Looks so winningly from far ;
Leave the needle in your seam ;
Let me rest awhile and dream —
(While your fingers the white keys
Guide through old tunes,) — dreams like these :

Dreams of faces I have known,
Some now here, but many gone ;
Dreams of pictures I have seen ;
Dreams of poets ; dreams of green
Murmurous pine woods, — how your song
Seems with all these to belong !

Through the pattern on the wall
New, fantastic patterns fall ;
There, with half-shut eyes I see
Wondrous, unknown tracery
That o'er mystic doorways grows,
Leading — ah ! who knows ? who knows ?
And, bewitching, poised between,
Merry, elfish figures lean.

The candle's flickering shine
Twines in the shape of a vine
Through the shadow of the room,
And there, in that niche of gloom
Flowers in a yellow bloom,

And drops like a spray of wheat
At my statuette's white feet.
Play a psalm, the one most dear ;
That will bring the children here ;
Let me watch their reverent eyes
And hands folded, white, child-wise,
Clustering where the taper gleams,
They sing softly ; — this me seems
Sweeter far than only dreams.

A SONG IN THE NIGHT.

FROM out the velvet drapery of gloom
That fills at twilight all the unlit room,
The singer's voice comes as in sweeter tune,
The singer's song seems a far rarer rune.

From out the night the lay of nightingale,
The whip-poor-will's prolonged and plaintive wail,
Win the ear strangely through the silent air,
Where few would heed in daylight's gilded glare.

So you, thro' midnight of your grief who fare,
You in the sombre robes that mourners wear,
May, passing, wake some soul to care and prayer
Who would not turn to look upon the gay and fair.

Sing on, dear heart, so patient in the dark ;
Some one may hark who would not hear the lark ;
Play on, brave fingers feeling for the keys ;
Some one of God's needs these notes, only these.

HORIZON.

I.

In Pain.

How dull the near horizon's line, —
One heavy leaden ring!
Yet stolidly the stalwart hills
Shoulder the tarnished thing,
And evenly on ev'ry hand
Support its circlet where they stand.

It holds the dusty daylight in,
And air to last to-day,
And roads that do not wind, and paths
That cannot lose their way;
A few feet pass, a few grains grow,
The field-flowers live, the four winds blow.

And Life is like a dingy cup
Of common, earthen ware,
And Heart some puny insect left
Wingless, to stifle there.
Vain weariness to try to climb
Or struggle, prisoner of time!

II.

In Patience.

How calm a fillet on the brow
Of hills, horizon rests!
Its silver rim with selvage fair
My nestling valleys crests,

Where deep within they hollowed rest,
Though low and narrow, not unblest.

From edge to edge, days come and go,
And spill their sun between ;
Like thistle-down, soft mists sail in,
And, as from lands unseen
Birds come and sing, strange sweet thoughts do,
Beyond horizon floating through.

So calmly 'neath its burnished brim
Heart lies, and is content
To wait awhile, and smile at all
Dear guests the Lord has sent,
In that fond hope to cross the stars,
Sometime, beyond horizon bars.

PREJUDGED.

THE doubtful balancings of some fine issue lay
Upon your furthest, keenest sense a claim
For honorable poise. To accurately weigh
Aught capable of test so subtle, needs an aim
Slow, careful, and self-concentrate,
With quiet time to hesitate.

But from the crowd comes up, asking no time to
weigh,
A verdict prompt and cheerful, ultimate, concise ;

“He will do so ; his reason this,” these favored say,
 In no perplexity, nor needing to think twice,
 His choice they foreordain ; foreknow
 The *raison d’être* ; all’s easy so.

In odd confusion stands a man before these free
 And easy confidants of Fate, quite helpless he.
 “*We know*,” they say. Now he, he does not know.
 You see
 Theirs the advantage, then. How the event will
 be
 They’ve merely to declare. Before
 He speaks he’s published broadcast o’er.

They know ! — The man has no defense that can
 prevent
 Prevision such as theirs. Half in humility
 And half amusement scans he his predicament ;
 Nor can one blame him if, with sense of outrage,
 he
 Should turn upon the easy crowd,
 So self-assured, and cry aloud,

“There was a man once, who, apparently like you,
 His lord’s mind took for granted ; he was sure he
 knew
 That mind, and that mind’s will, and all that would
 ensue.
I knew thee, said this man, *that thou art hard* ; —
 and, through

Being so sure, met doom as dire
As any deliberate liar.

“The insolence of being sure sometimes, it seems,
Draws on itself surprise not to be coveted;
And he his neighbor's right of choice who so esteems
A thing assumed, were better vexed like me in-
stead
By men who, unasked, sift his cares
And coolly settle his affairs.”

A CAPTURE

I CAUGHT it; yet I am not proud,
I have no smallest will
To vaunt myself and seek applause
For having displayed skill.
It cost no skill; the easiest thing
In life it was to do;
I caught it without use of baits,
Snares, nets, tricks old or new;
And still, I am not vain of that,
As maybe I have been
Sometimes at a facility
That made me quick to win.

I caught it; yet I am not proud,
And you are quite unfair
To say that I parade it, though,
And show it everywhere.

I'd rather not; it's not my fault
 My capture will obtrude —
 Though I would hide it if I could —
 Persistently and rude.
 Oh! who am I to wax elate
 And step braggart and bold?
 I caught it, but am just as meek,
 For I have caught — a cold!

KEEPING AWAKE ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

WE shall keep awake, you know,
 Certainly all night long. And so
 To pass the time let us make believe; —
 What would you do on Christmas eve
 If an angel should come and say,
 "You may do what you like, till way
 Up to the dawn of Christmas day, —
 You may play as we angels play?"

Oh! if I could do as I would
 And play like the angels, I should
 Put back the white lilies that grew
 In the garden all summer through,
 And hang on the roses again,
 For they never have been here when
 We were having Christmas, and I
 Don't think it so fair; do you? And why?
 But anyhow flowers are so queer!
 I don't know exactly, my dear,

But I think they only play dead,
And would come to life if we said
The right magic word, just as well
For Christmas as summer. Don't tell!

What else would I do? I would fling
Gold dollars about, — and I'd sing
This house full, the church full; yes, stuff
Both so full there would be enough
To last till another year came, —
For sister declares it's a shame
The way the choir sings. Then you see
How nice it would be, thanks to me!

Oh! yes, and I'd let out the Thing
That lives in the sleigh-bells. They swing
But you don't at all see the sound.
It lives there inside. It is round,
I always did think if I could
Let but that shut-up Thing, I would!

Think how much there would be to do!
And then, besides just me and you,
There are people nobody knows —
On Christmas eve I should know those; —
And people much older than we
Who have no good times that I see; —
And so I would hurry away
To the angel, I'm sure, and say,
I have found more people; oh! please,
Won't you make it as nice for these!

What a long while it is ! Perhaps
We might take turns now and have naps ;
But you take the first turn, because —
Well — I *cannot* miss Santa Claus.

Can she blame them to-night or deride
Who listens unseen at their side
In the Christmas eve's keen starlight ?
No ; not on the Christ-child's own night
For the sake of that little Child
She but smiles as maybe they've smiled
Who do always behold His face,
And a rev'rent hush fills the place.

THE GIRLS AND THEIR HOODS.

GRAY the cold skies are, wintry the weather ;
What is this flutter of hues together
That is not flaunt of garden nor feather ? —
Gay, little school-girls, dainty hoods under,
Whence did you get your pattern, I wonder ?
Enchanted I watch you, puzzling to think
Where I have seen such blue, cardinal, pink.

O dear little school-girls under your hoods !
Something it must be 'twixt you and the woods ;
These are the colors I've seen the flowers wear,
Your faces are such as they ought to bear,
Your voices ring out as blossom-bells should ; —
Come — which is the blossom ? which is the hood ?

“HOLD OF HANDS.”

YES, I went to see the pictures ;
And 'twas good
In this man of millions, surely,
That he should
Let us in for once to wander
Where we would
Through his galleries that cover
Half a rood,
But I came away with envy,
And the sigh,
“ Now 'tis over, and tomorrow,
Passing by,
All will be again locked wholly
From my eye,
All these visions fit for angels,
All these gleams
Of a light celestial shining
But in dreams
To us poor folk ! — We're defrauded,
As meseems,
For his millions give him chances
That our love
Of the lovely cannot make us
Have and prove :
E'en though there are pictures selling
On the street
I cannot afford to buy them ! ” —
Vision sweet

Sudden stayed my murm'ring fancy,
Stayed my feet.

Just two children, lifting wistful
Large clear eyes,
Down the street they walk together
And surmise
None before can have discovered
In this guise
Such a place as this great world is
For surprise.
The small adventurers this world then
'Twixt them share,
And their hands are tightly clasping
As they fare,
For they've half a mind to turn back, —
Half to dare, —
But the one is of the other
Taking care.

Ah! I brought a picture home then, —
There it stands;
Will you look? The title's only
"Hold of Hands."
Galleries I still may get me,
Magic wands
Of millions lacking, — for my eyes
Their demands
May as honored be in making,
Through all lands.
Here's my picture, not for sale, sir:
"Hold of Hands."

MASTS AND SPIRES.

'Tis the calm before the storm : —
Lying dreamily and still
Slender masts the harbor crowd,
Where the ships bide safe from ill.
Far the city sloping down,
Pressing to the clear-cut rim
Of the level water, lifts
Her keen spires, shapely and dim.

Like a deep, inverted shell,
Full of mystic, changeful hues,
Faintest rose and palest amber,
Cloudy grays, ethereal blues,
Over harbor, over town,
Clasps the wide-embracing sky,
While both masts and spires prick sharp
Toward that one dome on high.

O spires that stand so steady,
Nor ever away remove,
O masts that seem poised as fast,
Yet given to shift and rove,
Both now in the distance blent
To look so closely akin
Scarce can the eye note contrast, —
New solace I read herein !

Longings and aspirations
My life lifts up to heaven :

They come and go inconstant,
Hither and thither driven,
Still maybe one Eye will mark
That alongside aims more true
My frail spars rise as they rise,
Pointing star-ward as they do.

CAPRICE.

I.

“COME, fading roses, come away,
For it has wearied me all day
To see you wither; must I so
Learn what I do not want to know —
That no immortal flowers are you,
Veined with imperishable dew,
But must fade as things human do?
And yet, by you there came to me
Such words as must immortal be.”

II.

Though by herself, — her fire-lit room,
As dusk sifts in, half glow, half gloom, —
She blushes when from its high place
She lifts the clear-cut crystal vase.
“Why will you fade, you pretty things?
Oh, that your petals each had wings,
To waft you now, like butterflies,
Unsullied, back to Paradise!

"I will not watch you spoil ; but I
Am foolish without reason why ;
I cannot bear to throw you by
For feet to trample in the mire,
Nor can I bear the thought of fire."

III.

While through her window then she cast
Her dreaming looks where night dropped fast,
She noted how the rhythmic snow,
Like music to the dumb, all slow,
Timed to a perfect measure fell.
"These snow-flakes fit my rose-leaves well,"
She smiled, half sighing ; "are they kin ?
O spirit snow-flakes ! have you been
Ever so human-proud and fair
As these buds of my one night's wear,
And did you take the nun's white veil ?
Are you content, pure, cold and pale ?
Here, snow-flakes, — teach them how to die,
And bear them with you as you fly."

She dropped her roses with the words ;
And, like stray flocks of alien birds,
The startled wing of rose-leaf, wing
Of snow-flake, brushed by, fluttering.

IV.

A motion gliding where they drift ; —
With sudden stealthy steps and swift

A half-clad child springs up, — her shawl,
Held 'neath her chin, breathless let fall.
One second's glimpse of the wild zest
With which she holds the buds carest
To her dark cheek ; of eyes that lift
Frightened aloft ; then the flakes drift
Rhythmic as ever, but alone ;
Roses and beggar-child are gone.
She shut the casement, drew the lace,
And, fingering her empty vase,
Across her mind let phantoms pass
Of thoughts, like shadows in a glass.

“ I meant my own caprice ; who knows
Whose will she does ? it proves that those,
My roses, other will obeyed
Than mine ; I wonder where they'll fade ?
Float, float, soft snow-flakes, all the night,
Play voiceless music by your flight,
Keep your perfection cold and white !
My roses, human for their part,
Choose shelter in a living heart,
There, by a throbbing love kept warm,
Out of the dark, out of the storm.”

HER PHOTOGRAPH.

HERE is her picture ; see, how true !
The dear original we knew
Has long been gone ; the copy's left.
It does seem strange that art grown deft

Enough to pin this shadow here
And hold it fadeless year on year
Could let herself, her real self go,
The warm bright self we wanted so,
The presence always doing good,
All ready, strength, cheer, fortitude.
And strange this bit of paper could
Get for itself what we fain would
But have been utterly denied
Whate'er our longing since she died,
The trust to hold forever fast
Something of her on earth would last.

Ah! hungry eyes return, return
To gaze on this. If looks could burn
The bit of paper long ago
Had turned to ashes, for below
The pictured face would eager thought
Have scorched its way, explored and sought
To find what stayed when all that made
The changeful play of light and shade
On lip and brow had vanished quite
Beyond pursuit of mortal sight.

"How like!" we fondly say, and yet
Then even cannot quite forget
To wonder if we wrong thereby
The being she is now, and try
To think what fairer shape she wears
Of loveliness, what features bears;

Half-dreading lest in that new place
No guise familiar we shall trace.
But love makes the misgiving fleet,
And instinct turns its bitter sweet,
Believing looks so learned in this
In any world we cannot miss,
Because He never mocks at us
Who sets us learning, loving thus
Each other, while not yet bear we
The lineaments that ours shall be.
Unnatural the far-fetched fear!
All that thou wert remembered, dear,
And on our hearts imprinted true
Will somehow prove our surest clue
To know thee as thou shalt be, when
We meet, nor go apart again,
But, knowing e'en as we are known,
Find each his place, find each his own.

LITTLE WHITE JACKET.

WHO'D be a kernel of corn,
With a head
So round, so hard and so dull?
Kitten said;
"It's stupid, empty and dry,
Old and dead."

Into the fire-place she tossed
In her scorn

Her handful of good-for-naught
 Yellow corn,
Left-over corn of last year
 Now forlorn.

Ha! who is this leaps in air,
 With a quick,
Short grunt, exclaiming Pop! pop!
 And a kick
So funny that Kitten cries,
 “ What a trick ! ”

“ My dear little White Jacket!
 Who are you?
What is this most curious
 Thing you do?
Is it turning inside out,
 Or some new
Queer fashion of somersault
 You go through?

“ Were you in the kernel, then?
 But how, pray,
Did you ever get out so?
 Own the way
Just to me, cherub pop-corn, —
 I won't say ! ”

Kitten coaxed and she flattered;
 Not one word
To this day from White Jacket

Has she heard,
Though she cracked a grain open,
This absurd

Little lass ! — in the fancy
That maybe
She'd surprise a White Jacket
And thus see
How he lived in the kernel, —
She told me.

His secret White Jacket keeps ;
But she seems
Expecting it yet, and oft
Sits in gleams
Of the fire-popping corn ; while,
As she deems,
Troops of cherub White Jackets
Share her dreams.

MADELINE JUST NAMED.

It seems they have named her !
Henceforth as we christen
The child, she will listen
To learn her own title, thus
Just come to all of us,
And so begin guessing
Herself out, — the blessing !

But, since they have named her,
She becomes the more truly
A real life, launched duly,
By owners engraven,
Sent forth to the haven
Like a precious ship laden
And sped, bonnie maiden !

And, since they have named her,
The new word she will bear
As the title-page fair
Of some noble book seems,
Where one pauses and dreams,
Admiring, with wonder,
Ere turning leaves under.

For, now they have named her,
What will it grow to mean,
This name Madeline,
Called familiarly o'er
Day on day, more and more,
By mate, mother and friend,
And maybe in the end
Lips more passionate still ?
By and by what will fill
Full of her, brimful e'en,
This her name, Madeline ?
Character fine and fair,
Fit for a life-time's wear ;
Gracious in word and way,

Thus do we hopeful pray,
Looking off, years away.

Then write they have named her,
Write her down Madeline,
On the page white and clean,
O, Recorder Divine !
Of that vast book of thine,
Where the names Thy dear love
Doth adopt, stand above ;
And when the night's falling,
Send angels out calling
Now come home, Madeline,
Madeline ! Madeline !

THE COTTAGE PORCH.

A TURNER, WITH POETIC INTERPRETATIONS.

I.

By B. S. P.

THE level beams of sunset
On field and hill are bright,
With one low hue of crimson
To burn against the night.
Across the meadow it shineth
On daisy and golden rod,
Till you fancy that the sun-motes
Are a ladder of gold to God.

A cottage porch whose trellis
Peeps from close vines between,
Where scarlet-throated trumpets
Toss 'mid their leaves of green.
There's an idle wheel beneath them
And a spinner's empty chair,
And the pale flax in the sunset
Gleameth like a maiden's hair.

And this is all the picture ;
No beauteous Marguerite
Is shadowed on the curtain,
To make it more complete.
No round-armed spinner, whose bodice
Revealeth a curved neck white,
No quiet-faced grandame watcheth —
There is naught but the wheel in sight.

Its quiet beauty thrilleth,
Its peace enfolds and clings,
Till, like a psalm, it soothes you
With hush of unseen wings.
But what is the story hidden
In the spinner's vacant chair?
And why does the pale flax glimmer
Like the gold of a maiden's hair?

Had she who spun grown weary
Of distant fields aglow?
And heart-sick from her vigil
For one who lingered so?

Did the sunset's scarlet banners
 Thrill her heart with useless pain,
Till she turned away and left them
 Till they shudder to gray again?

II.

BY E. B.

You say you would have me paint her,
 The spinner, whose easy chair
In the cottage porch stands vacant,
 By the wheel arrested there.
Yes, I could dream you her story,
 I think, looking long enough
At your picture of vines and blossoms,
 'Broidered in thick-wrought fluff,
Over the cottage front; 'twould be
 Simply natural to me
If, through that open door, she came
 Stepping out most daintily.

"Poet, tell me her story." You
 Command me, exacting queen.
Well, then: Her name is Alicia,
 The Lady Alicia; her mien
Is high-bred and haughtily humble;
 Her face is Spanish and brown,
Save where quick, red blood leaps over,
 Its duskiness all to drown.
Every noon here she sits to spin,
 In the ripe of day and year—

“Her dress?” O, duskish, with scarlet
Ribbons. (You’re sheer woman, dear!)
She sits alone at her spinning,
And sings so low that wheel,
And bird, and bee, can deftly
What a love-song ’tis conceal.
But the lover her proud kin scorn,
Of her single heart preferred,
He, over bee, and bird, and wheel,
Will lose not a word unheard.
Wilful, banished, Alicia still
Will have all things as she list;
Pray, can faithfulest dowager
All sleepy noons resist?
Dame Margaret cries, indignant, “Sleep!
When you know I never sleep!”
And, at such industry, delights
The lulling wheel to approve;
So she innocent nods, the while
One under the hedge tells love,
And hears, for the rhythmed hum more sweet,
Alicia’s fond, low reply,
Safe-covered ’neath drone of wheel.

“Then is this the reason why
The chair is empty, the wheel still,
The flax untouched? is she flown
At last his bride? or heard she
The dame call?” Ah! it has grown
Dear list’ner, long, long years since then;

So you must dream it out as best
You can, if the lady again
Comes to her wheel; — the rest
May be of love or grief: may be
How her children after her,
Learning to use the same wheel, hold
For her sake honored its whir.
The spinning-wheel and the pale, pale
Flax, and the maid's skilled hand;
Are all no more now than any
Scattered dust in the land.

But I cannot finish the tale;
A mist comes over my eyes;
A tender pathos, for me, so
Your picture underlies.
Ah! many a time have I seen
Place and work left like this —
Fair, well-ordered; only one thing
Just the "vanished hand," to miss!
Still, with the sense of that presence
Tingles all hers that you touch,
But now the familiar spinner
Will nevermore handle such —
And you pity the dumb things there,
Waiting her, uselessly, long;
You could wish them all gone with her,
If such wishing were not wrong.

THE LOOK OF WONDER.

SHE was a woman old and spent,
And in her lengthened life had blent
Whatever fills a woman's lot
Who naught evades, selecting not
Among life's nearest cares and claims,
Called by such common, homely names.

Hard work the willing hands had known,
That served with tireless toil her own.
Her life within four walls was bound,
So rigorous its hourly round;
She scrubbed and baked from morn till night, —
The world must manage as it might.

Children she reared, and lived to see
Wayward or wise, what they would be;
And on the church-yard hill there were
Graves that besides belonged to her;
She labored with a patient heart
That reasoned little of its part, —

But simply took what each day brought
To do her best by, knowing naught
Of the perplexed, fine wondering
Which sets minds subtler pondering;
She wrought, it seemed, the lesson sent;
Left us to find out what it meant.

Now she had done. Never before
She had refused to help, at more
Than common need ; but now she kept
Still, folded hands, smiled on and slept,
While others scoured and sewed and swept,
Or quickly at her old tasks stept.

They looked their last upon her face,
And marveled as they left the place,
For on the features that had worn
So long a look of care, and borne
Few other marks, was now impressed
A seal more foreign e'en than rest.

It had significance of grace,
That look of wonder on her face,
As though she caught at last a sight
Of glory, and a second might
Have given space to tell us what ;
— The second could not be, — was not.

She took the secret with her, yet
The trace upon her forehead set
Was like a gesture of the Lord's,
Conveying meaning without words ; —
And as they went, women and men,
Out through the busy world again,

Plying their own vocations there,
Each with his hope, his hurt, his care —

Often would come amidst it all
That gentle memory's recall,
The perfect quiet of the place,
The look of wonder on her face.

FOOTPRINTS.

I.

It came across a thousand miles
When winter snows lay white ;
I seem to see the track it took
I bend with eager, tender look
To trace me out the sight.

II.

The baby's shoe, first worn-out shoe
Lies here against my cheek ;
It never walked ; no dusty speck
Left on the snow and least dark fleck
The way it came bespake.

III.

Still, strewn a trail of footprints long
They show, this tiny girl's ;—
First, faint upon far snows, then plain,
I thread them as I would a chain
Of graduated pearls.

IV.

And for a treasure guarded choice,
Most carefully apart,
I keep the Christmas gift so new,
The footprints of a little shoe
That ended in my heart.

BON VOYAGE.

M. H. D.

SPEED the good ship, outward going!
When she slips o'er horizon's thin rim,
Out of sight soundlessly blowing,
As years, vivid once, vanish dim,
Bon voyage!

Hail to the ship! threading deeper
Her restless, untracked roads in ocean!
As safe Heaven favoring keep her
As it does the free birds in their motion;
Bon voyage!

Dear Heart, be the May's kindly sending
Bonny, bright skies for thy sake;
Good spirits, glad omens, attending
The ship's silver-cut, gleaming wake!
Bon voyage!

Love with its benison follows,
Hope shall look after, and yearning
Tender-eyed Patience the morrows
Count, till her loved be returning;
Bon voyage !

E. M. B.

THE influence of her singing is like that of a June holy-day—a perpetual breath of clover, and of Sabbath hours. One is conscious of—

“Sweet sounds of breathing roots, and flap
Of rustling wings: sweet scents
Of clover and unnamed perfumes,”

as one reads, or lingers in thought over the pages which make us know that—

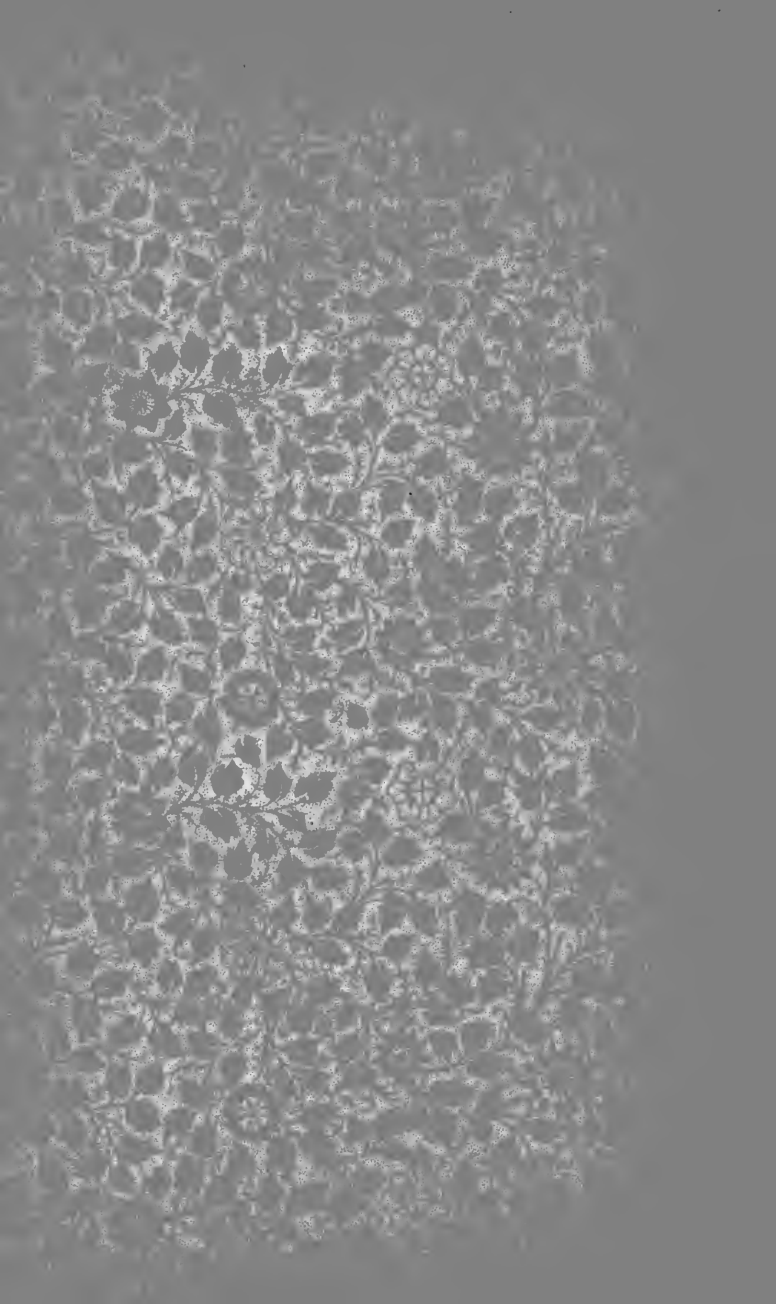
“The world is richer that she lived,
And Heaven that she died.”

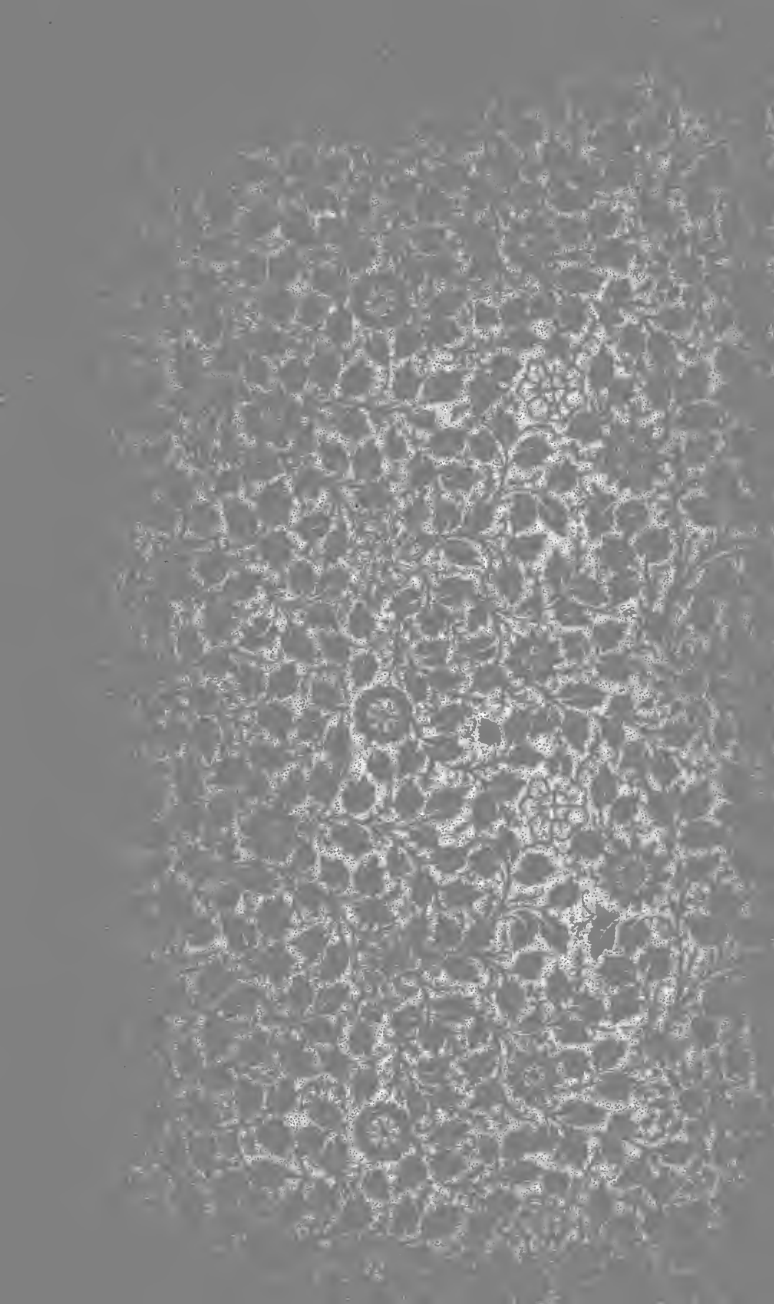
Into stranger hearts who knew not the beauty of her daily walk on earth, as well as into those familiar, to whom her soul sang words as exquisitely blended as are those in “The Protest,” comes this influence, freighted with such sweet and gracious thoughts as lead to a following of her flight upward to her singing-place among the stars.

A. L. W.

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